Gender and Communication in Euripides' Plays

BETWEEN SONG AND SILENCE

J.H. KIM ON CHONG-GOSSARD

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Gender and Communication in Euripides' Plays

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Between Song and Silence

By

J.H. Kim On Chong-Gossard

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Cover illustration: A first-century CE Roman sculpture traditionally identified as 'Orestes and Electra' and signed by Menelaos, pupil of Stephanos. From the Ludovisi collection in the Palazzo Altemps, Rome. Photo by J.H.K.O. Chong-Gossard.

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This book is dedicated to three important men in my life
whose early passing affected me much:

to my father,
Reverend Dr. John Harvey Gossard (1937–2002)

to my maternal uncle,
Reverend Frank Atherton Hua Peng Chong (1944–2008)

and to my beloved Gerald (1993–2007),
feli dilecto, amico optimo, omnium animalium carissimo

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: GENDERED SPACE IN GREEK TRAGEDY AS COMMUNICATION

ION: Mother, let my father, who is nearby, also share
the joy which I have given you.
CREUSA: (singing) *Oh son,*
what are you saying? How I am found out!
ION: What do you mean? CREUSA: *You were born from another man.*
ION: Alas! Your maidenhood bore me as a bastard?
CREUSA: *Not accompanied by torches or dances*
did my wedding rite
give birth to your person, child.
ION: Alas! Am I lowly born, mother? Whose?
CREUSA: *The Gorgon Slayer be my witness!* ION: Why did you say this?
CREUSA: *Who, beside my cliffs,*
on the olive-planted hill
sits— ION: You tell me things crooked and untrustworthy.
CREUSA: *By the rock where the nightingale sings,*
With Phoebus— ION: Why do you name Phoebus?
CREUSA: *I lay in a secret bed.*
ION: Speak on, for you're saying something dear and lucky for me.
CREUSA: *And in the tenth cycle of the month,*
I bore you, a secret offspring to Phoebus.
ION: Oh, you've spoken the dearest things, if true.

Euripides *Ion* 1468–1488

At the climactic moment of Euripides' *Ion*, the Athenian princess Creusa discovers that the young man she had tried to poison—a keeper of the sacred temple at Delphi named Ion, whom Creusa's husband had acknowledged as his bastard son—is in fact her own long-lost child that she had abandoned at birth, the offspring of a rape by the god Apollo. It is a brilliant reversal of fortune for Creusa who had spent years unable to bear children to her husband Xuthus, all the while remembering that in her youth she had exposed her only son, the product of a god's sexual violence. Like any proper stepmother, she feared Ion would usurp her position in the household once Xuthus proclaimed him as his heir. Now she learns the dreaded stepson is really her own son, the boy she had always assumed was dead—and she herself just tried to kill him! But at the moment of their recognition, the young Ion needs to

know the truth of his parentage. He has spent his whole life in Apollo's temple at Delphi in service to the god, who raised him like a son; yet in the course of this play, he was convinced that his biological father was Creusa's husband Xuthus. Learning that Creusa is his mother, he assumes Xuthus is still his father, until she reveals that his father was a different man (*allothen gegonas, allothen*, literally "from another you were born, from another," *Ion* 1472). Ion is desperate to know whether he should still consider himself a bastard (*nothon*, 1473) and lowly born (*dysgenês*, 1477); and Creusa is desperate to tell him the truth, that he is the son of the god Apollo himself. But the most striking aspect of this exchange is not so much its content, but the fact that it is musical. Creusa is singing for the entirety of lines 1439–1509 (indicated with italics in my English translation), and Ion is responding in speech. It is an *epirrhematic amoibaion*, a performance convention in Greek tragedy in which one actor sings in lyric meter to the accompaniment of musical instruments, while the other replies in iambic trimeters.

What is the significance of Creusa's singing? Is it a psychological enhancement of this climactic scene, highlighting Creusa's excessive joy at learning that her child is alive? Does the music add to the sincerity of her narration of past events, namely her rape by Apollo and her abandonment of her baby? Or was it simply conventional for Euripides to write an *epirrhematic amoibaion* at interesting moments in his plays? Euripides' surviving plays and fragments contain eleven *epirrhematic amoibaia* in duet form, and two three-way *amoibaia*, making it one of his favorite modes of delivery. Is the finale of *Ion* another example of Euripides' dramatic style that repeats familiar tragic tropes in new settings? All these explanations are possible, but the contention of this book is that Euripides' interest in tragic conventions (such as the *epirrhematic amoibaion*) is always bound thematically to his interest in gender. Creusa sings at the finale of *Ion* because she is a woman, and because Euripides reserves song (and other modes of communication) for his female characters to express sentiments that male characters must learn but cannot experience for themselves.

The present study is a contribution to an ongoing inquiry concerning the representation of gender in Greek tragedy through gendered speech. It is an inquiry that can best be summed up in the question, "Do women in Greek tragedy sound like women, or are they just 'men in drag?'"[1] When the ancient Greek actor donned female garb and a

[1] This is a phrase most recently used by Judith Mossman (2001), 383.

female mask, how did the lines he read contribute to his imitation of a woman? Were the words written to sound 'female'? Do tragic women, in fact, converse in a 'female speech'? Alternatively, if they do not use a speech that sounds female, do both female and male characters then sound the same, employing the same verbal techniques, so that female characters merely sound like men in drag?

This book's approach to gendered speech in Greek tragedy is to look at specific modes of communication that Euripides either reserves for or associates with women, such as Creusa's song. Other modes include intimate conversations, silences, and apologies. As regards song, there are metrical conventions that divide tragedy into moments of spoken iambic trimeter, moments of sung lyric meter, and moments of something in-between (such as anapests, which some scholars imagine were chanted, and trochaic tetrameters, often delivered by alternating speakers). Since it has often been observed that women sing more than men in tragedy, it is worth testing the validity of that observation, formulating rules for the tragic woman's use of lyric, and examining the dramatic implications of lyric for female and male characters. This study moves beyond standard analyses that equate female lyric with exaggerated emotion, and suggests that female lyric in Euripides' tragedies is better understood as a unique convention of communication when the semantics of normal speech are not sufficient, e.g., in recognition scenes when the female singer must defend herself in a truth-telling fashion to a male listener.

This book argues that Euripides does construct his female characters to sound like women, and that this is effected not only by these modes of communication, but also by an explicit recognition of Athenian social conventions which make these modes appropriate.[2] For example, the semantics of the silences of Euripidean male characters, female characters, and female choruses' oaths of silence will be contrasted. 'Silence' appears to serve different dramatic purposes for women than for men, and Euripides reserves certain categories of silence for his women. All of Euripides' presentations of female silence (usually as secret keeping) are intertwined with social expectations of the idealized

[2] I agree with Mossman's (2001: 375) sentiments: "I believe that the Greek tragedians did try to make their female characters sound, not like real women, but at least like tragic women, as opposed to tragic men." Mossman later qualified this statement by adding that tragic women also sound like individuals capable of being perceived "as moral agents, as subjects, as thinking beings" (Mossman 2005: 362–363).

silence of women, the fear of women's gossip, and concern for reputation. Euripides always shows the contradictions behind social ideals; tragic women are never really silent, idealized silence cannot exist anywhere in the tragic world, and in fact silence itself can disguise devious deception, thus toying with the real fears and anxieties of an Athenian male audience.

Euripides also represents his women as having a space of their own where they talk among themselves. The power of female gossip is often balanced against a female solidarity that operates almost everywhere in tragedy. The Euripidean heroine repeatedly confesses personal secrets to choruses of neighboring women (as in *Medea* and *Hippolytus)*, despite the real danger of women's gossip ruining her reputation. Female choruses, instead of disassociating themselves from heroines who share their private problems intimately, promise to keep silent and eventually aid heroines in intrigues designed against the men who caused their domestic crises. Some Euripidean women who find themselves out of place apologize for speaking, in deference to the social expectation that women should not be heard, or even mentioned, in public. But other women out of place deliberately flaunt this social code by explicitly wanting to be seen, heard and talked about (such as Evadne in *Suppliant Women*); others (such as Clytemnestra in *Iphigenia in Aulis*) must constantly judge what is appropriate behavior in any situation, for example, when an act like supplication is an appropriate impropriety.

Euripides' interest in women is a well-known feature of his work. Even in ancient times, his contemporary Aristophanes (in his comedies *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Frogs)* profited from highlighting, or perhaps embellishing, Euripides' reputation for staging salacious stories and for shocking audiences with his 'bad women,' or at the very least by exposing women's deceptive tricks. In *Frogs*, the ghost of Aeschylus chastises the ghost of Euripides for corrupting the Athenians, not least because he embraced the 'New Music'; given that the vast majority of Euripides' singing characters are female, such a comment is also a comment on the construction of gender. This book argues that regardless of whether one decides that Euripides was a 'misogynist' or a 'feminist' (and in many ways, that is perhaps the wrong question), Euripidean women as a group are represented as having experiences that are uniquely different from those of men, and this difference is at the heart of much tragic suffering. One way in which Euripides underlines this gender difference in his tragedies—a genre based on speech—is his creation of gender-specific patterns of communication between characters.

Previous studies of gendered speech in tragedy have focused on the use of specific words, such as the particle, the pathetic expression, the oath, or the form of address, as data for the reconstruction of 'female' speech and speech patterns.[3] Despite the immediate problem that the artificial language of tragedy is far removed from the 'normal' everyday spoken Greek of fifth century Athens, philologists have nevertheless been interested in how the tragedians represent their female characters—not as 'real women,' but as fictional women from myth, or 'tragic women' peculiar to the dramatic genre—as having recourse to specific expressions, phrases, and oaths.[4] Laura McClure (1999) went a step further and proposed the existence of separate 'verbal genres' (lamentation, *aischrologia*, ritual song, gossip, and seductive persuasion) which can be categorized as 'female,' both within Athenian drama and the real world of ancient life.[5] Lamentation was undoubtedly a woman's privilege and duty in ancient Greece, and the research of Gail Holst-Warhaft (1992), Helene Foley (1993), and Nancy Sultan (1993) are excellent studies of the discourse of pain, how tragic women control this discourse, and how the discourse itself can have dangerous social consequences. Other studies of gendered speech in tragedy have a contextual focus; for instance, Silvia Montiglio (2000), within a larger study of silence in Greek literature, presented some arguments for gender-specific silences in Greek tragedy. Judith Mossman (2001) examined how female characters handle themselves differently in an *agôn* with a man and an *agôn* with a woman. Michael Silk (1996) recognized that a genderless speech can exist in some contexts (such as screaming while being murdered) where men and women give voice to virtually the same sentiments. Judith Fletcher (2003) studied Euripidean

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[3] J.D. Denniston (1954, lxxiii), in his study of Greek particles, famously wrote, "Perhaps women, on the principle that τὸ θῆλυ μᾶλλον οἰκτρὸν ἀρσένων, were peculiarly addicted to the use of particles, just as women to-day are fond of underlining words in their letters." The Greek quotation is Euripides' *Heracles* 536. Greek and Roman drama (especially comedy) has been used as a source for what 'real-life' women sounded like, in studies by Michael Gilleland (1980), D. Bain (1984), and J.N. Adams (1984).

[4] In the mid 1990s, Alan Sommerstein (1995) tallied gender-specific expressions (such as oaths and obscenities) in Aristophanes; Laura McClure (1995) tallied gender-specific pathetic expressions and amount of lyrics in Euripides' plays; and Eleanor Dickey (1996) examined forms of address, some of which were sex-specific.

[5] See McClure (1999), 32–69 for her detailed discussion of verbal genres in Greek drama. McClure refers to Joel Sherzer's definition of 'verbal genres' as "culturally recognized, routinized, and sometimes though not necessarily overtly marked and formalized forms and categories of discourse in use in particular communities and societies" (Sherzer 1987: 98).

women's manipulation of oaths from men. Mark Griffith (2001) focused on the reception of tragic women's words by other characters within a drama; e.g., characters might presume that women will speak with a certain bias, or that women all speak alike, or that women's words are not worth hearing.

Any study of how female characters speak in tragedy is connected to considerations of their relationship to tragic space. In studies of 'female space' in tragedy, the emphasis has gradually shifted from the notion of the 'female intruder' to the notion of women's lack of space, and finally to a larger consideration of the cultural definition of the 'feminine.' The definition of 'space' itself has shifted from physical properties (exits, entrances, props) to narrative and textual properties (descriptions of places).[6] The scholarship on gender and space in Greek tragedy is quite broad, but certainly received its kick-start with Michael Shaw's groundbreaking article in 1975 on the 'female intruder.' His basic assumptions were that women (in Athenian ideology) belong in the home, men in the city, and that all women in tragedy (played by male actors) are doing what women should not do, simply by coming outside the house; and furthermore, that there are such things as 'feminine' virtues and 'masculine' virtues that are in conflict in tragedy. Paradigmatic for his analysis were Sophocles' *Ajax* and Euripides' *Medea*. This polarity of the home as a female space and the city as a male space, and tragic women as 'female intruders,' came under much scrutiny in the 1980s by Helene Foley, Patricia Easterling, and Froma Zeitlin. Foley's studies in particular focused on the representation of women from Greek prose texts (especially orators) and physical remains, challenging the long-held notions of the 'oriental seclusion' of Greek women.[7] Foley

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[6] See Klaus Joerden (1971) for both a discussion of extra-scenic spaces (cities, countrysides, temples) invoked and created by the text, and an excursus on the height of the stage of the Theatre of Dionysus, the meaning of the *parodoi*, and the *ekkyklêma*; Joachim Dingel (1971) for a discusson of props (in particular the urn in Sophocles' *Electra)* and spectacle; Suzanne Saïd (1989) for a discussion of topographical extra-scenic spaces in tragedy (in particular, the thematic importance of Theban spaces); Ruth Padel (1990) for an investigation of the archaeological details of theatrical spaces, and a mapping of stage syntax (e.g., of the *skênê* as a barrier or boundary between seen and unseen, illusion and reality); David Wiles (1999) on the Greek performance space as one which resonated with the topography of Athens, a re-appraisal of the syntax of the *skênê* and *orchêstra*, and on theatrical 'meta-space' created in particular by the poetical imagery of the choral lyrics; Rush Rehm (2002) for a typology of space in the Theatre of Dionysus, in six categories: (i) theatrical space, (ii) scenic space, (iii) extra-scenic space, (iv) distanced space, (v) self-referential space, and (vi) reflexive space.

[7] Foley (1982a) and (1982b). Josine Blok (2001) extends this argument further by

argued that real-life Athenian women had plenty of roles to play in the functioning of the city, while men had a great deal of interest in the workings of the household; and, that this interconnection of interests between the sexes was recognised by dramatists, particularly Aristophanes. Easterling's addition to the debate was an analysis of female propriety—what women are actually represented as doing in tragic space, primarily when they are outside.[8] Contrary to Shaw, she argued that tragic women often do exactly what they should be doing. The ritual of lamentation, deeply associated with women in Greek culture and literature from Homer onwards, is the favored activity of tragic heroines; for example, Sophocles' Antigone and the Electras of both Euripides and Sophocles deliberately leave the interior so that their mourning of a brother or father can receive attention from a chorus of either neighbours or mature male citizens. And, as Easterling would argue, that is precisely what they should be doing, since such rituals are women's responsibilities.[9]

Froma Zeitlin in 1985 famously argued that tragic women do not belong to any particular space; instead, women are liminal characters, on the thresholds between spaces, the boundary crosses where Greek ideologies about gender roles are least stable. As a result, women are representations of the 'other,' always reflecting in some way on male characters and their experience (and, by extension, the experience of the male audience).[10] Similarly Mary Kuntz in 1993 investigated the notion of tragic women's 'spatial alienation,' linking the role of women in Greek heroic folklore and the social realities of Athenian marriage, with the women represented on the stage. In Kuntz's words:

> Women are defined by an irreversible progress from one man's home to another. No fixed place is theirs; they are always exiles and always

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invoking the anthropological concept of "coordinated choreography" and reaches the conclusion that,

> "*Provided it was the right time and the right occasion*, women were perfectly entitled to be in public space; they would not by definition lose their respectability by being there, nor was the public area suddenly changed into a feminized sphere" (Blok 2001: 116). [Emphasis original]

[8] Easterling (1987).

[9] However, even such expected rituals are transgressive and disruptive in tragedy. See Holst-Warhaft (1992) for a study of the social dangers inherent in tragic lamentation.

[10] Zeitlin (1985a).

> suspect. A woman's place may be in the home, but it is not her home and when she is introduced into it she may bring a productive fertility or destruction.[11]

Kuntz also suggested how the familiar spatial dichotomies of exterior vs. interior, and home vs. not-home, could be thematized in tragedy, and how the sex of the heroes involved can determine specific plot patterns. For example, she argued that tragic women and tragic men have opposite relationships with the narrative setting of exile. For men, the home signified not only a birthplace, but also ancestral lands and a geographical identity; yet tragic men in exile (Oedipus, Philoctetes, and to some extent Prometheus) refuse the offer of rescue and the opportunity to go home, and often exhibit personal conflict with the rescuer. For the 'spaceless' woman in exile (Iphigenia, Helen), the offer of rescue is heartily longed for and accepted, but these women return (in Kuntz's view) to exile in another man's home.

Intimate Conversations

Inspired in part by Kuntz's innovation in shifting the focus of interpretation towards textual representations of space (i.e., what the characters say), one initial premise in this book is that language and communication can be regarded as a determinant of gendered space in Greek tragedy. If Zeitlin and Kuntz are right in saying that tragic women are indeed 'spaceless,' it is very interesting that tragic women often converse so freely and intimately on stage, and that by choosing whom they talk to and how, women create 'a space of their own.' Levels of intimacy and the success of communication between characters, as they are constructed in the texts, are equally good criteria in the description of space as more traditional criteria, such as geographic setting.

Whenever we open our mouths and talk with someone, no matter where we are, we create a 'space' in which we are intimately connected with each other. Wherever we are engaging in a conversation (whether in the hallways of a university, or over dinner, or in a hotel room, or on public transport), that place becomes 'our space.' We also know how it feels when that space is interrupted, e.g., when someone you're gossiping about suddenly shows up; or when you're in a really intense

[11] Kuntz (1993), 126.

discussion, and the waiter interrupts everything to pour you a glass of wine; or when a stranger on the bus steps on your foot. In our modern parlance, we might say someone 'is invading my personal space' if a person attempts to create intimacy when we do not want any. These are mundane examples from an everyday modern Western experience of how space and communication relate to each other. Of course, Greek tragedy was not real life, nor was it modern, since tragic men and women are fictional characters, often kings and princesses from mythology, hanging around palaces in front of choruses, so that modern concepts of privacy or 'ownership' of our words need not fully apply. Nonetheless, space in tragedy can be created by nothing more than two or more people talking to each other, regardless of the physical 'place' or imagined 'setting' that the characters occupy.

When the Greek tragedians constructed a relationship between space and communication, gender mattered. Tragic space can be labelled 'gendered' when the communication or interaction between characters, or between characters and a chorus, requires the exclusion of one sex. In a *male space*, men communicate with other men and exclude women from that discourse, either because women are not there or should not be there. *Female* space is likewise that which is ideally inaccessible to men, in which women communicate with each other without apology. When women enter male space, they apologize for their presence (e.g., Macaria at Euripides' *Children of Heracles* 474; for a fuller discussion, see Chapter 6 of this book), or are pushed back by a male force (usually verbal, such as Creon's treatment of Antigone at Sophocles' *Antigone* 480 ff.). When men enter female space, they do not apologize for their presence, but might be made to feel out of place or unwelcome; this is often voiced by a female chorus, as in *Medea* 576–578.[12] Sometimes the intruding men attempt to usurp the space as their own. Menelaus in *Andromache* 309 ff. does the latter when he threatens the life of Andromache's son, thus exercising his power over Andromache's movements; she must choose whether to abandon her place of sanctuary before Thetis' statue, or not.[13] The gender of the chorus is vital to the creation

[12] *Medea* 576–578: CHORUS: "Jason, you have ordered/dressed up (*ekosmêsas*) these arguments very well; but all the same, even if I speak contrary to general opinion (*para gnômên*), you seem to me not to be doing right in abandoning your wife."

[13] *Andromache* 309–313: MENELAUS: "I am here, having caught your son, whom you sent for safety to another house in secret from my daughter. You were boasting that this wooden statue of the goddess would save you, and that the people who hid him would save this child. But, woman, you are revealed to be less clever than Menelaus here."

of a gendered space, since so often intimate conversations occur not between the actors' roles, but between an actor's role and the chorus. Choruses have the potential to support a protagonist or other character verbally—not that they always do, but the potential is there.[14]

The implications of female space and male space in tragedy do not appear to be equal. Women often apologize for intruding into men's space, but there is no analogous expectation for men. A constant theme of this book's inquiry, then, will be whether or not men in tragedy are represented as having the same social power as real life Athenian men, or indeed, modern day Western men. To quote Nancy Henley and Cheris Kramarae:

> Greater social power gives men the right to pay less attention to, or discount, women's protests, the right to be less adept at interpreting their communications than women are of men's, the right to believe women are inscrutable. Greater social power gives men the privilege of defining the situation—at the time, telling women that they 'really wanted it,' or later, in a court.[15]

This criterion of what can be termed 'sex-segregated communication' (i.e., conversations between men, and conversations between women) is more useful in the definition of a gendered space in tragedy than other criteria, such as the 'feminine' or 'masculine' nature of the fictional setting (e.g., a house, an army camp, a temple, a barbarian country). Reading gendered space *as* communication offers useful and exciting readings of tragedy. By examining how tragic men and women intrude into each other's communicative spaces, one can also observe certain conventions that occur across a range of plays with different 'settings.'

When women in Greek tragedy enter a male space where men have exclusive communication, women have to fight for control of language, and this manifests itself through various verbal strategies. Some women use apologies (e.g., Macaria in *Children of Heracles*, or Aethra at Eur. *Suppliant Women* 293ff.). Others (such as Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 264ff.) resort to forceful language, often described by other characters as 'masculine' (as the Watchman describes Clytemnestra's *androboulon kear* at *Agamemnon* 11). The woman is obliged to act like a

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[14] Maarit Kaimio (1970), 68 argues that the more open and intimate relationship that exists between a heroine and a female chorus is characteristic of Euripidean drama, as opposed to Aeschylean or Sophoclean drama.

[15] Henley and Kramarae (1991), 390.

man in order to exercise authority, and even then, her audience (such as the chorus of Elders in *Agamemnon)* need not believe at first what she has to say. Sometimes the fight for control of language fails, so that female choruses are often virtually ignored by men (*Medea, Bacchae, Phoenician Women, Iphigenia in Aulis*).[16] Yet chorus women do get noticed if they are wailing (Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes)* or supplicating and wailing (Aeschylus' & Euripides' *Suppliant Women).*

When men enter a female space (whether in a public or private setting), men's presence is disruptive. Tragic women in the wilderness, even when surrounded by a female chorus, assume men will assault them, as at Euripides' *Electra* 220–227 and *Helen* 550–556. Here geography and communication mutually reinforce each other. Apparently there is something about living in a wild, uncivilized land that leads women to assume that their physical safety is at risk, so that any unknown man becomes a 'male intruder.' Tragic women often hide themselves when men invade their space. Phaedra, for instance, withdraws at *Hippolytus* 601 when she hears Hippolyus arguing with the Nurse; Eurydice in the fragmentary *Hypsipyle* veils herself when Amphiaraus arrives (as indicated at *Hypsipyle* 757.75).[17] Tragic women often change their verbal strategies for different male intruders. In *Hecuba*, for example, the intrusion of men requires different rhetorical techniques from Hecuba. To Odysseus, Hecuba pleads for mercy and the sparing of Polyxena, and reminds Odysseus of his obligations to her for having spared his life in the past (*Hecuba* 272–278). To Agamemnon, she pleads for the opportunity for revenge, and reminds him of his unique obligations to her, since she is the mother of his concubine (*Hecuba* 824–835). To Polymestor, she speaks deceptively (*Hecuba* 968–1022) to lure him into the tent where he will be blinded and his sons murdered.

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[16] In *Bacchae*, for example, the chorus of Asian bacchants is devoted throughout to Dionysus-in-disguise, and also sings with the possessed Agave at the play's culmination; yet all the other characters virtually ignore the chorus, even though the bacchants' mere presence as a band of foreign women in the city centre ought to receive some continued comment. These women address Pentheus (*Bacchae* 263–265) and Teiresias (328–329) directly at the end of their competing *agôn* speeches, yet Pentheus and Teiresias do not acknowledge the women; Pentheus does threaten to enslave the chorus women (510–514), but he addresses his remarks to Dionysus-in-disguise, and never makes good his threat.

[17] Line numbers and text are based on Martin Cropp 2004.

Sometimes male characters 'take over' a play that began with a female space and intimate conversations among women. In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* 971ff. and Euripides' *Hippolytus* 902ff., a father and son talk extensively with each other (immediately after the suicide of the father's wife, no less), while the female chorus withdraws from contact with the actors, like a machine shutting down. Whereas the female chorus shares some solidarity with the play's heroine (Deianeira in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* and Phaedra in *Hippolytus)*, once the heroine is dead and men take over the space, the chorus keeps its involvement in the play to a minimum. [18] In *Medea*, the entrances of Creon (271), Jason (446) and Aegeus (663) arguably create a similar dynamic; the Corinthian female neighbors that comprise the chorus address not a single word to Creon, and are only briefly hostile to Jason. They do not address Aegeus, although they do bid him farewell as he leaves (or perhaps after he has left). This indicates that the gender of a space can change; if gendered space is communication, then when the dynamics of communication change, so does the space. It is well known that space in Greek tragedy is fluid, especially when it comes to the passage of time and the precision of fictional location; gendered space is another aspect of this fluidity, and extremely appropriate for a genre in which all action is carried out through words.

Greek tragedy also represents a gendered space where the opposite sex does not intrude. Women's space in particular is created by Euripides by women's intimate conversations. In play after play, Euripides' heroines interact with female choruses in intimate ways that could not be possible if men were present. Women gossip, argue, make confessions, and plan strategies together. This happens in all different settings: 'domestic' settings, wilderness settings, army camps, public settings. Thus tragic women create a 'space of their own,' even in settings where they don't belong, such as an army camp. For example, the choruses of captive women in *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women* carry on conversations that the Greek soldiers are oblivious of. Meanwhile, in some Euripidean plays, we witness a social invisibility of women in public that matches their status. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the chorus consists of nosy,

[18] As Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz (1992), 46 described the ending of *Women of Trachis*, "It is striking that the Chorus of maidens is silent from the entry of Heracles; the focus is now on the father and son and their bond …"

sticky-beak women from Chalcis who have sauntered over to Aulis to gawk at the Greek forces on display, and they have no role in the army whatever. The women of Chalcis are not noticed by the men, except for Agamemnon's brief command for their silence. One might compare David J. Cohen's study of women in a modern-day Lebanese village:

> [Women's] statements to the effect that the women never leave the house in practice mean that they never leave the house without a purpose, a purpose that will be regarded as legitimate in the eyes of the community—for example, going to the fountain, going to work in the fields, visiting a neighbor, etc.[19]

These Lebanese village women (whose cultural ideals, Cohen argues, illuminate the situation of women in Athens) often go out to perform tasks, but are officially not 'seen' by men, and can therefore talk about themselves as if they never went out at all. Similarly the chorus women of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, standing in a large group, are never assumed to be there to cause trouble. They are doing something socially acceptable, namely, admiring the Greek fleet and the soldiers, which is surely a spectacle worth admiring (just as the Argive army in the fragmentary *Hypsipyle* is an object worthy of women's gaze). All the conversation between actors in the first third of *Iphigenia in Aulis* takes place between men, ignoring the chorus women completely, so that a male space is created. Interestingly, however, once Clytemnestra arrives, the chorus is conveniently available to help her and Iphigenia down from their chariots and to tend to the baby Orestes; and when Iphigenia learns she must die, the chorus is magically present to share intimate emotions of lamentation (1276 ff.), thus creating a moment of female space.

Elsewhere in tragedy, women contrive elaborate plots with a female chorus' complicity, in all different settings: Medea plots revenge in a domestic setting; Creusa plots to murder Ion at the temple of Apollo at Delphi, which is a public and religious setting; Hecuba plots to blind Polymestor in an army camp; and Helen plots to escape from Egypt, which involves the slaughter of many Egyptian sailors.

What is so fascinating in all these scenarios is that, when female choruses do engage with tragic women, female solidarity wins out over any other type of interaction between chorus and actor that one might anticipate. For instance, in *Hippolytus*, the women of Troezen are Phaedra's neighbors and might be expected to gossip about Phaedra's

[19] Cohen (1989), 11.

adulterous desires, given that they themselves are so horrified by them. Instead, after Phaedra appeals to them, the women show solidarity to her, even when it involves covering up her plans to discredit Hippolytus. Similarly in *Medea*, the Corinthian women hold fast to their promise to keep Medea's plans secret, even when it costs the life of Medea's children and (what is even treasonous) the lives of their king and his daughter.

What is at stake in the Euripidean representation of women's intimate conversations? Why is it important that women talk alone? If we look at recent studies of spaces that are segregated by gender, we find an answer: the stratification of knowledge. In her study of gendered spaces, Daphne Spain suggested that spatial segregation is one way that a group with greater power can maintain its advantage over a weaker group, in particular with respect to knowledge:

> Many types of knowledge exist, only some of which is highly valued. "Masculine" knowledge is almost universally more prestigious than "feminine" knowledge. Men's ability to hunt in nonindustrial societies is therefore more highly valued than women's ability to gather, although women's efforts provide more of the household's food. In advanced industrialized societies, math and science skills (at which men excel) are more highly valued than verbal and relationship skills (at which women excel).
>
> Shared knowledge can bind the members of society together. Well-known origin myths, for example, create solidarity around a group identity. Knowledge can also separate the members of society, however. Every society restricts some types of knowledge to certain members. Successful hunting techniques are known only to a few men in nonindustrial societies, just as medical expertise is known only to an elite few in advanced industrial societies. Sometimes the distribution of knowledge is controlled through institutionalized gate-keeping organizations (such as a men's hut or the American Medical Association). Thus every society possesses differently valued knowledge that theoretically is available to all members but in reality is not.[20]

Spain cited three spatially segregated institutions in American history as exempla of the withholding of knowledge from women: higher education (colleges and universities), labor unions, and professions (e.g., medical). However, in Euripides, it is not the knowledge of men which is protected by segregation. Instead, the institution of the physical separation of the sexes—the ideology throughout tragedy that women

[20] Spain (1992), 16.

belong in the household in the company of other women—serves to invent a *female* knowledge that is withheld from men. Male intruders—Jason at *Medea* 446 and Menelaus at *Andromache* 309—might change a scene's mood when they invade women's private space (indeed, Menelaus brings Andromache's son, whom he threatens to kill!), but they cannot be privy to what women have talked about. The number of male victims of women's plots (Jason in *Medea*, Polymestor in *Hecuba*, Theoclymenus in *Helen*, Thoas in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, even Ion in *Ion*, etc.) indicates Euripides' delight in showing the unequal balance between gendered spaces: women do not have access to men's space except in emergencies; men can intrude women's spaces without apology, but they can never have access to women's knowledge. As Ruth Padel expressed it:

> The two important interiors spectators had to imagine for themselves, woman and house, were in Greek societies (as in others) bound closely together in male perceptions. Men expected not to know all of what lay within. They imagined but did not know. Conflict in the dramas between male and female, public and private, knowledge and imagination, is intricately related to the theater's physical contrast between real and imagined, seen and unseen space.[21]

This same male anxiety about knowledge of the female (and its correlative, female knowledge) which Padel understood to apply to the ancient male spectator, is itself operative in the internal fiction of many Euripidean tragedies.

Female Knowledge

What exactly is female knowledge? On the one hand, it is a body of knowledge that men suspect women possess and talk about with each other, but which they deliberately conceal from men. Throughout ancient Greek literature, there is much anxiety expressed by male authors as to what exactly that knowledge pertains to. Aristophanic comedy and the genre of the literary mime (exemplified by the Hellenistic poets Herodas and Theocritus) dramatize the Greek male's most common guess as to what women discussed when they were alone. It was sex…not merely the quality of sex with their husbands, but particularly the lack of it, which might lead to extra-marital affairs.[22]

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[21] Padel (1990), 344.

[22] For a more detailed discussion, see Peter Walcot (1994).

Female masturbation was also a suspected topic, not necessarily as a substitute for intercourse, but as an alternative (even supplemental) form of sexual activity.[23] Another facet of men's anxieties was the conception of children. Greek men, like Poseidon in the *Odyssey* (11.249–250), might have expected one act of intercourse to result in conception and pregnancy. But if this did not occur, then the woman was suspect; either she was physically defective and in need of treatment, or she had willingly destroyed the seed to avoid pregnancy. That women have uncontrollable lusts is a common enough female stereotype in Greek literature, and Euripides was not ashamed to repeat it. In fact, he often places these male anxieties in the voices of his female characters who on many an occasion express the need to keep knowledge of sex among themselves. In *Andromache*, women speak of hiding female lust in language suggestive of keeping women's medical knowledge a secret. The captive Andromache tells Hermione that women suffer the disease of sexual instability more than men, but that they conceal it (*proustêmen*, literally "we stand in front of it") decently (*Andromache* 220–221). Later in the same play, the chorus women warn Hermione (954–956) that she has revealed too much (*agan ephêkas*) to Orestes in her narrative about how gossiping women cajoled her into plotting her rival's death.

Inseparable from the Greek male's discomfort with and assumptions about female knowledge of sex was a deeper ethical quandary. There was a common ethical stance within Greek aristocratic society that men should not show their faults. Pindar's words are representative:

> …ἀλλοτρίοισιν μὴ προφαίνειν, τίς φέρεται
> μόχθος ἄμμιν· τοῦτό γέ τοι ἐρέω·
> καλῶν μὲν ὦν μοῖράν τε τερπνῶν
> ἐς μέσον χρὴ παντὶ λαῷ
> δεικνύναι· εἰ δέ τις ἀνθρώ-
> ποισι θεόσδοτος ἀτλάτα κακότας
> προστύχῃ, ταύταν σκότει κρύπτειν ἔοικεν.
>
> …not to display to strangers what toil
> we are bearing; this at least I shall tell you:
> your portion of noble and pleasant things

[23] Compare especially the sixth and seventh mimes of Herodas. Mime six dramatizes two women's conversation on the purchase of a dildo. David Kutzko (1999) has suggested that the one woman, Metro, is actually having an affair with the dildomaker/shoe-maker, Kerdon, who appears at the start of the seventh mime. The use of a dildo by a woman is by no means incompatible with her having an affair with a man; the dildo is not so much a symbol of 'lack' as it is a further example of Greek male anxieties of what women talk about when alone.

you must display openly
to all the people; but if any
  heaven-sent, unbearable trouble
befalls men, it is fitting to hide this in darkness.

Pindar fr. 42 = Stobaeus *Anthology* iv. 45, 1

ἓν παρ' ἐσλὸν πήματα σύνδυο δαίονται βροτοῖς
ἀθάνατοι. τὰ μὲν ὦν οὐ δύνανται
  νήπιοι κόσμῳ φέρειν,
ἀλλ' ἀγαθοί, τὰ καλὰ τρέψαντες ἔξω.

The immortals apportion to mortals a pair of evils
for every good thing. Now, fools cannot
  bear them gracefully,
but good men can, by turning the good part outward.

Pindar *Pythian* 3.82–85

Pindar stresses that if one went around looking at imperfections, there would be nothing to praise.[24] In a world without Calvinist worries about inner truth, Greek men needed to display only the good and hide the bad. Everyone had a sphere of intimacy; one should share one's problems with one's friend (*philos*), but treat a guest (*xenos*) with respect and not burden him with personal affairs. In the case of women, however, these ethics of behavior have different boundaries. Since women's intimates are other women (in tragedy, this is the chorus), husbands have the potential to be excluded. From a man's point of view, however, he should be the one with whom she shares her troubles; in fact, she should be transparent to him. In tragedy, however, this discourse of whom the woman shares her troubles with and whom she hides them from—that is, the discourse of who is in or out of the circle of intimacy—becomes intertwined with men's fears of women's conversations and women's sexual knowledge. Ancient Greek literature is full of male anxieties concerning what women do in the home that men do not know about and cannot control. For example, the speaker of the fourth century courtroom speech Lysias 1 (*Defense for the Murder of Eratosthenes*) confesses it was his own fault that he trusted his wife to be alone in the house because she managed it so well; he stopped worrying

[24] Compare *Hippolytus* 465–466: ἐν σοφοῖσι γὰρ / τόδ' ἐστὶ θνητῶν, λανθάνειν τὰ μὴ καλά ("This is the part of the wise among mortals: to keep hidden the things which would not be beautiful"); and a fragment of Sophocles (fr. 745, Lloyd-Jones), σπουδὴ γὰρ ἡ κατ' οἶκον εὖ κεκρυμμένη / οὐ πρὸς θυραίων οὐδαμῶς ἀκουσίμη ("Activity that is well concealed at home should not by any means be heard of by outsiders").

about her sexually even as he stopped worrying economically. However, while he was failing to oversee his own house, his wife succumbed to adultery.

Tragic women also are self-conscious of the potential dangers of women's desires. If women could keep their bad knowledge of female passions to themselves, it was a good thing; if they could change the appearance of their behavior, it was even better. Andromache's line to Hermione about concealing the disease of female desire (*Andromache* 220–221, quoted above) can be read not only as ridiculing women's preoccupation with sex, but also prescriptive of how women should change their natural behavior to one which is not scandalous. Similarly, the chorus of Phthian women tell Hermione she should gloss over women's faults (κοσμεῖν τὰς γυναικείας νόσους, literally "dress up the diseases of women," *Andromache* 956). But there is an asymmetry built into this ideology. Tragic women recognize that men generalize *all* instances of female evil-doing.[25] Creusa complains that the reputations of bad women get mixed up with the good, so that women's matters in general are a source of irritation to men (*Ion* 398–400). A speaker from Euripides' fragmentary *Captive Melanippe* argues,

> ἄλγιστόν ἐστι θῆλυ μισηθὲν γένος·
> αἱ γὰρ σφαλεῖσαι ταῖσιν οὐκ ἐσφαλμέναις
> αἶσχος γυναιξί, καὶ κεκοίνωνται ψόγον
> ταῖς οὐ κακαῖσιν αἱ κακαί· τὰ δ' εἰς γάμους
> οὐδὲν δοκοῦσιν ὑγιὲς ἀνδράσιν φρονεῖν.
>
> It is most painful that the female race has become hated
> since, for women who have not fallen, fallen women
> are a disgrace, and wicked women share their censure
> with those who are not wicked; and with regard to marriage,
> men believe that women think nothing healthy.
>
> *Captive Melanippe*, fr. 493[26]

A speaker in a fragment of Sophocles' *Phaedra* also asks a chorus to be sympathetic and silent, for "a woman should cover up what brings shame on women" (Sophocles Fragment 679, Lloyd-Jones). In other words, by not talking about other women's problems, the tragic woman avoids being implicitly blamed for other women's evils; the two passages from *Andromache* above could also be read in this way. In contrast,

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[25] The roots of this ideology can be found at *Odyssey* 24.198–202 in which Penelope may earn a graceful song from the immortals, but Clytemnestra's murder of her husband will earn an evil reputation for all women, even those who are virtuous.

[26] Greek text by Cropp (1995).

men's offenses are never generalized. This seems to be the point of the famous choral ode from *Medea* (410–430) which hopes for new songs that can generalize men's unfaithfulness in the same way that men have generalized women's.

On the other hand, female knowledge is not just about sex; it is women's knowledge of their own bodies, as the female body is what all women share. The medical writers of the fifth and fourth centuries suggest that an oral tradition of the inner workings of the female body existed among women whom Ann Ellis Hanson has called "women of experience," sympathetic to younger women who lack knowledge of womanly conditions.[27] The medical writers categorize such women as prostitutes, nurses, midwives, and even simply one woman helping another examine her womb.[28] One Hippocratic writer suggests that women are reluctant to speak to doctors about 'female' problems of the body:

> Sometimes women do not know why they are sick, until they have experienced the sicknesses that come from menstruation and they become older. Then both necessity and time teach them the cause of their sicknesses. At times sicknesses become incurable for the women who do not know why they are sick, before the doctor has been correctly taught by the sick woman why she is sick. For women are ashamed to tell even if they know, and they suppose that it is a disgrace, because of their inexperience and lack of knowledge.[29]

One can infer that the women in these medical treatises preferred to discuss their bodies with other women. That an oral tradition of remedies for female ailments might have existed among women is further suggested by the use of the word *gynaikeia* to describe therapies for women's diseases. Whereas experienced women in the world of Euripides suffer from a mental disease (a distressing attachment to sex, such that it needs to be hidden from men), for the medical writer, women of experience could help each other in positive ways. The two worlds (fifth-century tragedy and fifth-and-fourth-century medicine) are not far removed from each other; Jennifer Clarke Kosak in 2004 suggested that Euripides was not unfamiliar with the same cultural assumptions and

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27 Hanson (1990), 309.

28 Hanson (1998) emphasizes, however, that no one has any way of knowing the origins of a given gynecological remedy; there is no irrefutable evidence, for instance, of an oral tradition of women's remedies being passed down from mother to daughter.

29 *De morbis mulierum* I.62, trans. Hanson.

gynecological concepts that informed the medical writers.[30] Certainly Euripidean adult women share common physical experiences, and in fact, in most Euripidean plays with distinct heroines, the heroines are paired with female choruses who share the same level of sexual experience. Medea, Phaedra, and Andromache (in her name play) are visited by neighboring married women like themselves.[31] In *Hippolytus*, the women of Troezen try to guess at Phaedra's illness from their own knowledge of the pain of the body; the chorus suspects she is pregnant, since the same "breath once darted through my womb" (δι' ἐμᾶς ᾖξέν ποτε νηδύος ἅδ' αὔρα, *Hippolytus* 165–166).

At the same time that Euripides' women share a bond through their common diseases, they also share a bond through their shared experiences. Euripidean women repeatedly invoke female solidarity as they recognize the social situation into which they are placed by men. When they conjecture that Phaedra is pregnant, the chorus women of *Hippolytus* also wonder if Theseus has been unfaithful to her, a common enough occurrence in the lives of women (*Hippolytus* 151–154). Medea addresses her chorus with a discourse on a woman's difficult position in marriage, on the prophetic power she must have to gauge her husband's moods, and the new customs she must learn as she enters a new household (*Medea* 230–240). Later in the same play, it is the Corinthian women's knowledge of motherhood that causes them so much grief when they must confront Medea's firm resolve to kill her children as the best means to punish Jason (*Medea* 811–818, 846–865). In contrast, Euripidean men never appeal to a 'male' solidarity based on shared male experiences.

Beyond the body, Euripidean women also possess 'positive' knowledge that is useful to men; that is, women are often represented as knowing the most appropriate solution or course of action in any sit-

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[30] Kosak (2004), 13–14 writes, "Nevertheless, even though I cannot—and do not—claim that Euripides or his fellow tragedians studied medicine or read medical literature, it is also very likely that by the late fifth century, Athenian citizens would have some general knowledge of these theories because of the nature of medical practice in this period. … I would suggest that we find shared cultural assumptions in both the medical and tragic genres."

[31] Shared sexual maturity acts as a source of female solidarity in the absence of other factors, such as a shared social status or ethnicity. Medea, Phaedra and Andromache are significantly foreigners as far as their choruses of female neighbors are concerned. Medea and Andromache are barbarians from the East; Andromache is a slave; Phaedra might be Greek (she is a Cretan princess), but she and her husband are in exile in Troezen.

uation. For example, Aethra in Euripides' *Suppliant Women* persuades Theseus to save the bodies of the Seven; Macaria in *Children of Heracles* knows the best solution for the troubles of the ensuing battle: namely, the sacrifice of herself. Sometimes women's knowledge is particular to her own past experience; Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris* is the only person who knows that she was rescued at her sacrifice, yet also knows that her father was willing to kill her. Creusa in *Ion* (as stated at the start of this chapter) is the only one who can prove that Ion is Apollo's son, since she has private knowledge of her own union with the god.

Summary

What this study of Euripidean tragedy suggests as the basis of its inquiry is a definition of space as communication. Whenever female characters are presented as conversing with each other in a manner that requires the absence of men, a female space is created, regardless of the physical or social nature (domestic or non-domestic) of the fictional space they occupy. In just this way, Euripides often represents women engaged in intimate conversations, sharing knowledge to which men have no access. Women are thus the major players in a game that the tragedians (especially Euripides) play with their male spectators, on the question, "does gender matter in society?" Even though tragic women are fictional creations, they are rooted enough in contemporary Athenian social conventions that they can latch on to the anxieties of a male audience. The fictional intimate conversations between women on stage invited each spectator to become a male voyeur of something he knew existed in his own house between his own wife and her neighbors, but which he never saw or heard. This voyeurism stimulated his anxiety for his lack of knowledge and lack of control over his own household.

Do tragic women have 'a space of their own'? Yes, but they have to invent it themselves. The social burdens on women and men as regards their speech is unequal in tragedy. This illustrates well the ideology of gender in operation in the genre; tragic women, like women in Athens, have to watch what they say and how they say it when engaging with men, and they behave differently, more intimately, when speaking with women. Men, however, have no similar burden. In this theater of imagination that we call Greek tragedy, where a person or a group of people say some lines and the play begins, throughout it all, gender does matter.

Every good book must begin with words of warning and words of encouragement for the reader. First the warning. It is impossible for any book to do justice to the entirety of what survives of Euripides' plays, or indeed to cover fully the complexities of even a single play. This book does not pretend to offer complete interpretations of any single drama. Certain plays (*Ion, Hippolytus, Medea, Helen, Suppliant Women, Hypsipyle*) will receive more attention with regard to the verbal techniques present in them; other plays (*Cyclops, Rhesus, Bacchae*) will receive very little or no attention. At times the coverage of a play might seem thin (but hopefully not superficial); that is because this book is not intended to introduce all of Euripidean drama to its reader, nor does it pretend to offer a global reading of tragedy that will explain all of what Euripides wrote.

In addition, this study has very little to add about the gendered voice of the tragic female chorus. The lyric voice of a female chorus is distinct from the lyric voice of a female character (played by an actor), because a chorus' voice is reminiscent of the collective voice of lyric choruses of women that existed in other (non-dramatic) Greek rituals. Some very thorough studies of this aspect, from the mid 1990s onwards, are by Helen Bacon, Claude Calame, John Gould, Simon Goldhill, and Helene Foley.[32] Although Chapter 5 of this book discusses the silence

[32] Bacon (1995) and Calame (1995) consider the continuities between choral poetry of the archaic period, choral lyric of fifth-century tragedy, and choral performance as an everyday aspect of Greek communal life. Calame's comparison of the lyrics of Pindar's *Partheneia*, Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* results in an acknowledgment of the tragic chorus' allusion to ritual as "merely a mimetic and fictional celebration, only relevant to the dramatic action represented on stage," due to a "distance provoked by the fact that the female roles were played by actors and chorus members of the opposite sex, reversing the gender categories" (Calame 1995: 137, 148). Gould (1996) and Goldhill (1996) focus on the 'marginality' of the female chorus, both in the sense that a women's collective point-of-view is 'other' than the male Athenian audience which is presumed to be the primary spectator of Greek tragedy, and in that a female chorus' social identity is often 'other' than the tragic heroine (Medea, Iphigenia, Electra, Hypsipyle, etc.) who is usually of royal stock and enduring extraordinary sufferings and challenges beyond what any chorus member can share. Yet these 'marginal' choruses sing lyric odes which often express a greater understanding of the 'big picture' of the crisis being dramatized. Foley examines the identity of all choruses (women, slaves, soldiers, goddesses, etc.) and the variety of choral involvement in action; she also observes that "female (or foreign) choruses seem to have the same degree of access to authoritative cultural memory, especially in the form of myth, as their male counterparts, even if they sometimes make a point of reminding the audience how they acquired their knowledge (at home, at the loom, from stories)" (Foley 2003: 21).

of some female choruses, it foregoes discussing the lyric voice of the female chorus in the interest of space.

Second, the encouragement. What this book will provide is a new lens for looking at Euripides' plays, which will encourage readers to bring new insights into favorite scenes and recognize thematic connections which were not noticed before. This book argues that Euripidean women do sound like women; but what that means depends on the context in which women communicate. Whether women sound deceptive or truthful or persuasive or obsessive is contingent upon whether their confidants are women or men, and upon what a woman chooses to say, or chooses not to say, or sometimes chooses to sing.

The fortuitous survival of nineteen complete plays and multiple fragments attributed to Euripides allows us to generalize about his style and speculate about a thematic 'project' in his work, to an extent not easily done with Aeschylus and Sophocles. Such speculations are further enhanced by the survival of the comedies of Euripides' contemporary, Aristophanes, who by parodying his style provides a helpful (if somewhat skewed) insight into how Euripides might have been interpreted and received in his own day. Euripides himself appears as a character in three of these comedies. Aristophanes' *Acharnians* of 426 BCE pokes fun at Euripides' constant recycling of the same material, specifically the 'king in rags' plot. In *Thesmophoriazusae* of 411 or 410 BCE, the character of Euripides tries to rescue his cross-dressed in-law by acting out scenes from his recent 'escape-tragedies' *Helen* and *Andromeda*. In *Frogs* of 405 BCE, written just after Euripides' death, the ghost of Aeschylus does a devastating job of proving that Euripides' prologue speeches all begin with the same predictable meter, and he brings up the issue of the 'kings in rags' again. The formulaic pattern of Euripidean plays (e.g. begins with a prologue, contains an *agôn*, might involve a king in rags, might include a recognition scene, ends with a *deus ex machina*) is often the basis of the reconstruction of lost plays, where, for example, a *deus ex machina* might be presumed to end a play because it is 'conventional,' despite the fact that some plays from all decades of the surviving corpus (*Alcestis* of 438, *Children of Heracles* from the 420s, *Trojan Women* of 415, and *Phoenician Women* of around 409) do not end in this manner. These pattens are so reliable, however, that one could almost develop a formula for writing your own Euripidean tragedy.

As a result, for modern eyes looking at what survives, we are torn between a compulsion to ascribe any Euripidean character, plot device or other convention to a 'Euripidean style,' and the opposite compul-

sion to see Euripides creating something unique each time. What is so rich about Euripidean drama is that these two compulsions mutually reinforce each other. It is perfectly satisfying to see, for example, Helen, Creusa, Hypsipyle, and Iphigenia as yet another 'type' of Euripidean woman, one who is abducted and/or raped and felicitously reunited with her male kin; yet even if such a tragic type is as ubiquitous as a king in rags, it cannot be reduced to mere recycling. For while on the surface it might appear that Euripides is inventing yet another abducted woman, nonetheless each woman's situation and experiences are specific and are tied to themes that are different in each drama. Euripides is simultaneously predictably formulaic, and also changing what he does all the time. This book is a study of Euripidean conventions of communication, which he used again and again and again, but freshly with each new incarnation.

The following chapters examine different modes of communication that Euripides reserves for and associates with his female characters, and demonstrate how each of these modes is interrelated to Euripides' recurring interest in female 'knowledge.' Chapters 2 and 3 focus on song and the association of the female voice with lyric, particularly in the tragic convention of the *epirrhematic amoibaion*. This study disassociates lyric from its traditional identification as exaggerated emotion, and suggests instead that lyric in the voices of female characters is expressive of other themes, such as knowledge, resistance, transition, and interrogation. Of special interest are recognition duets in which female song is used instead of trimeter to relate women's private knowledge of past events to the men who must rescue them. Chapters 4 and 5 consider how gender relates to silence, specifically how the chief characteristic of male silences is selective timing, while that of female silences is secret-keeping, often in the form of silent complicity. Finally, Chapter 6 addresses the scenarios of women in male space, how some women apologize for speaking, and how the problem of women 'out of place' is thematized in *Suppliant Women* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Chapter 7 will briefly summarize the conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

SONG AS KNOWLEDGE: RECOGNITION DUETS[1]

Women in Greek tragedy do a tremendous amount of singing. In the overall corpus of Euripides, one is more likely to hear a woman sing than a man, both in the sense that women (excluding divinities and children) have more singing lines (as proven in a tally by Laura McClure), and that women spend almost a fourth of their time on stage singing, while men spend less than one-fourteenth.[2] The very existence of the tragic convention of different meters of delivery—iambic trimeters, anapests, trochaic tetrameters, lyrics—implies that

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "Female song and female knowledge in the recognition duets of Euripides," *Greek Drama III: Essays in Honour of Kevin Lee*, BICS Supplement 87 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2006), 27–48. Reprinted with permission.

[2] McClure (1995), 40 tallied the number of lines of male and female singing and speaking roles (excluding divinities and children) in all the extant tragedies of Euripides (minus the spurious *Rhesus*, the satyr-play *Cyclops*, and the disputed first prologue of *Iphigenia in Aulis)*. She concluded that there are nearly an equal amount of male and female lines (including choruses), yet female characters (non-chorus) have twice as many singing lines as male characters, while male characters have twice as many speaking lines as female characters. Total lines for messenger speeches, which may include indirect report of either male or female speech, were counted as male. Total male lines (including male choruses): 12,106. Total female lines (including female choruses): 11,278. Total lines of male non-choral lyric: 790. Total lines of female non-choral lyric: 1,667. Total male (non-chorus) lines of iambic trimeter: 10,059. Total female (non-chorus) lines of iambic trimeter: 5,345. Total male (actor) lines of trochaic tetrameter: 328. Total lines of female (non-chorus) trochaic tetrameter: 104. Total male choral lyric: 929. Total female choral lyric: 4,162. Again, divinities and children were excluded. Recitative anapests were not tallied.

An analysis of her figures also reveals that the percentage of the total amount of female character's lines in the plays (7,116) that are sung in lyric (1,667) is roughly 23%; while the percentage of the total amount of male character's lines in the plays (11,177) that are sung in lyric (790) is only a mere 7%. Although recitative anapests are not included in this tally, they would not significantly alter the results.

A few modifications have been made to McClure's "Chart on Distribution of Lyric and Non-Lyric Lines in Euripides," published on page 40 of her article. The chart lists no lines of male choral lyric for *Hippolytus*, and 16 lines of male choral lyric for *Iphigenia in Aulis*. This is clearly a misprint, since there is no male chorus in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. An earlier footnote of hers makes reference to the brief choral passages sung by men in the third stasimon of *Hippolytus* (*Hipp* 1104–1110, 1122–1130), a total of 16 lines: the "16" in

Euripides desired a unique effect when he assigned lyric to any of his characters, male or female. It is easy to forget that it was not uncommon for Euripides to compose large sung portions for his actors (i.e., not choruses), amounting to as much as a third or even half of all the lyrics in any given tragedy. A tally done by Eric Csapo of the musically accompanied lines of actors in Euripides has shown that, of the total amount of lyric lines (including choruses, but excluding recitative anapests) in any play, the amount of actors' musical lines totals between roughly a quarter (in *Hippolytus* and *Suppliant Women*) to nearly half (*Andromache, Ion, Hecuba, Phoenician Women*) to as much as 68 % (*Orestes*).[3]

Tragic song has traditionally been discussed as emotional, and solo arias—which are often replete with pathetic expressions—are read as moments of gushing, venting, and even uncontrollable frenzy. Because women in tragedy do most of the singing, and because singing itself has been analyzed as a display of emotion, it has then been suggested that tragic women are by nature 'emotional,' and it was somehow improper or less appropriate for men to display emotion in song on the Attic stage. But this paradigm is not useful for the reading of Euripides.[4] If we look at song not as emotion but as a form of communication, we find that song is a type of speech to which tragic women have greater

her *IA* row obviously belongs in the *Hipp* row. Even so, the chart has not counted the lines of the chorus of Hippolytus' male attendants at *Hipp* 61–71 (a total of 11 lines); thus I have adjusted the figure in the *Hipp* row, Male Choral Lyric column, from the original 0 to 27, and the total lines of male choral lyric from 918 to 929.

[3] The figures of Csapo (2000), 413 indicate that there is no quantitative pattern in the amount of actors' lyric from the early to late plays. Although the plays after 415 contain more experimental contexts for actor's song (recognition scenes, the *teichoscopia* of *Phoenician Women*, the Phrygian's song in *Orestes*, the lyric anapests in the prologue of *Iphigenia in Aulis)*, the actual ratio of actors' sung lines to the total lyric content of any play is extremely variable. For example, plays in which the actors' lyrics total less than 20 % of the total lines of song include the *Alcestis* and *Medea* of the 430's, the presumably pre-415 *Heracles* and the posthumous *Bacchae*; 21–30 % include the early *Hippolytus, Suppliant Women* (420's?), and the posthumous *Iphigenia in Aulis* (excluding the first prologue); 31–40 % include *Trojan Women, Iphigenia in Tauris, Helen*, and *Electra*; 41–50 % include *Andromache* and *Ion*; and over 51 % include *Hecuba, Phoenician Women*, and *Orestes* (the Byzantine triad, interestingly enough). *Children of Heracles* contains no actors' song. See also Wilson (2005) for an excellent introduction to music in Greek tragedy.

[4] This paradigm might have some use in Aeschylus and Sophocles, as will become clearer in the discussion of Sophocles' *Electra* later in this chapter. Nonetheless, I still would hesitate to read *any* tragic woman as essentially emotional. My concern here is solely with Euripides, whose interest in women as tragic figures is undoubtedly a prominent feature of his work.

recourse than men. In the voices of women, song accomplishes different goals and expresses more varied sentiments than in the voices of men. It is therefore a specialized kind of female language; when tragic women sing, they accomplish and signal more with their songs than tragic men can. Most importantly, female song signals much more than merely emotion.

Lyric as Female Language

At first, the notion that song is a form of tragic women's language might not seem terribly surprising, since tragic women obviously do a tremendous amount of singing, much more than men. Edith Hall has also noted that the "tendency to gender song as feminine" was well established in the ancient world, not least because of the real-life expectation of ritual lamentation as a women's duty.[5] Yet tragic women's song also sounds 'female' because it is so often grounded in experiences which tragic men do not and cannot share, thereby expressing a wider range of sentiments than tragic men's song.[6] To illustrate this, this chapter will examine Euripides' recognition duets, a unique test case because their structure invariably juxtaposes a singing woman against a speaking man. In these duets, women re-live moments of rape, childbirth, and abduction (by gods or pirates)—physical sufferings which their male interlocutors need to learn about, but can never experience themselves.

In order to examine and unpack this apparently conventional metrical division, we need a useful lens. Hall's proposal that we "focus on the suggestive notion of emotive contrast, and take the 'unlikeness' of

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[5] Hall (1999), 113. See also Alexiou (1974). L.P.E. Parker (1997), 57 remarks that "In tragedy, the association of lyric anapaests with mourning (Klaganapäste) is stronger than that of recitative anapaests with marching. They are used extensively in a number of structurally elaborate scenes of lamentation."

[6] That women's language in Greek literature encompasses a wider range of meaning than that of men has been recognized for some time, for example, Bergren (1983) and Winkler (1990, esp. the chapter 'Double Consciouness in Sappho's Lyrics'). In Euripidean tragedy, women's song in general signifies more things (here, private knowledge and truth-telling) than men's song. However, there may be some significations of tragic song where gender makes no difference. Hall (1999), 122 remarked, "It is a distinctive and remarkable feature of Sophoclean heroic protagonists that they sing lyrics when in physical pain or extreme emotional turmoil, apparently regardless of gender." Silk (1996), as mentioned in the previous chapter, has also argued that many tragedies reach a crisis so catastrophic that individualized expression ceases; everyone sounds alike when screaming in agony.

lyric song to other types of delivery as the benchmark for a sociological review of tragic actors' song," is one of the most useful lenses of recent years.[7] It acknowledges that by its difference from ancient drama's other vocal conventions, lyric could become an aural focalizer. Song always had the effect of making the singer the primary focus of the audience—the ancient equivalent of putting an actor in the spotlight. This was made effective by lyric's striking aural otherness from normal spoken dialogue: lyric was sung to musical accompaniment that incorporated sounds other than the human voice; its text was written in highly stylized poetic vocabulary in a Doric dialect and with challenging (almost unnatural) grammatical syntax, and was performed in meters to which expert variation could be applied. In the ancient theater, when the music started and an actor's voice began to sing in a different meter, the spectator surely had a palpable response, be it the racing of the pulse or the brimming of tears. Several ancient accounts attest that tragic song, by arousing pity for the characters and situations on stage, had the power to elicit an emotional response from an audience. Herodotus describes how the audience burst into tears at Phrynicus' *Capture of Miletus*, which surely included lamentations in lyric (Herodotus 6.21.1), and Plato writes of spectators being "unduly possessed by the pleasure of music" (*Laws* 700d). Plutarch tells of a tyrant who left the theater during a revival of Euripides' *Trojan Women* because he did not want the citizens to witness him weeping over the sorrows of Hecuba and Andromache (Plutarch, *Pelopidas* 29.4–6).

With a depth not expressible in ordinary iambic trimeter speech, song unlocks or reveals the fictional inner self of the singer, a self connected to a traumatic past that is dictated by myth. With this in mind, Edith Hall argued that:

> … certain female characters seem almost pre-programmed to sing (Electra, Hecuba, Iphigenia, Cassandra). With others there is no consistency, and the choice of speech or song may partly depend on the extent of the 'interiorization' of a woman's character in an individual play.[8]

In a similar vein, Mark Damen has described Euripidean singers as "notoriously self-absorbed. In their songs they mention themselves and their direful situations repeatedly."[9] In a series of charts, Damen tallied the proportion of first-person references in Euripidean passages of solo

[7] Hall (1999), 108. See also Hall (2002) for her discussion of the singing skills required by fifth-century actors.

[8] Hall (1999), 116.

[9] Damen (1990), 134.

lyrics, lyric exchanges with choruses, choral stasima, and Aristophanic parodies of Euripidean monody. For monodists, "On average, every 3.3 lines they make direct reference to themselves in the first person."[10]

Song can often provide a connection to what is absent, invisible, or intangible. It can communicate what is beyond simple explanation, and thus outside the scope of iambic trimeter dialogue. Choruses and actors alike call upon gods or spirits in song, especially when they want a particular god or spirit to answer. For example, Cassandra in *Trojan Women* invokes Hymen, and the dirge (*kommos*) of Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* is a seance-like ritual to contact the dead spirit of Agamemnon. Interestingly, tragic characters do not sing when addressing a *deus ex machina*, because the *deus* is perceptible.[11] Actors also sing of things which cannot be seen or touched, but are part of their personal experience; by insisting that one knows or perceives what is imperceptible or intangible to others, the singer's words become authoritative. Sometimes actors sing about events that have not yet happened, both real and unreal. Hermione in *Andromache* sings of her fantasies of escaping her husband, whom she is certain will kill her; Alcestis sings of Death approaching her, which is a real event that only she can see. More often the invisible consists of memories, and song becomes the medium of contact with memory when one *relives* what one sings. Hypsipyle sings of past happy times in Lemnos, and Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris* remembers in lyrics her sacrifice at Aulis. Sometimes these memories involve divine or supernatural events that are incomprehensible and, therefore, best articulated in lyrics. Helen in her name play, for instance, narrates her abduction by Hermes in song, and the Phrygian slave in *Orestes* sings of Helen's mysterious apotheosis. At others times, personal memories are linked to communal memories of famous stories of the past, so that singers very often transport themselves outside of time by recalling mythological exempla and comparing their own disastrous sufferings to those of well-known heroes or heroines. This exercise is almost always a

[10] Damen (1990), 134. Damen used these figures to argue that *Orestes* 960–1012, which survives as Electra's monody, was originally a choral ode, given that the singer of this passage "uses the first person only seven times in 53 lines or once every 7.6 lines, less than half as often as the average monodist" (1990: 135).

[11] Notice, for instance, that although the wounded Hippolytus begins with spoken anapests (*Hippolytus* 1348–1353), builds to lyric anapests (1354–1369), and finally breaks into lyric iambics (1370–1388) to describe his pain, he nonetheless switches to spoken iambic trimeters when he perceives that Artemis *ex machina* is present (1391). In Euripides' *Electra*, brother and sister sing a duet of lyric iambics after they murder their mother (1177–1231), but use spoken anapests to address the Dioscuri *ex machina* (1295 ff.).

futile one; despite similarities of typology, no tragic character thinks his or her experience is exactly like another's.

Tragic song is also a marker of class. Paul Maas once argued that tragic characters of lower status (except the Phrygian in Euripides' *Orestes)* do not have sung verses, although some (like the nurse in *Hippolytus)* may have anapests.[12] Hall has expanded upon this, arguing that "lyric meters are a marker of birth status: slaves in Greek tragedy can sing—indeed they sing often—provided that they were freeborn."[13]

As the composer of both music and story, Euripides always had a choice as to which character (male or female) he wanted to elevate in any scene. As a result, the singing character invites the theater audience to see through her/his eyes and identify with her/his experience. Identification with the singer has interesting dramatic implications. For example, it can predispose an audience (both on stage and in the seats) to be sympathetic to what a character will say or introduce. A comparison with the ancient scholia on Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* is illustrative here. At line 237, the scholiast states that some argue that Antigone's lyric address to the chorus (237–253) and the chorus' response (254–257) ought to be athetized, on the grounds that "it would be better for Oedipus to proceed straightaway into his plea for justice."[14] The scholiast, however, argues that these should be retained since Antigone's address (which is called an *eleeinologia* for its incitement to pity) is "charming" (*epaphroditon*), given that Antigone and Oedipus are in the midst of misfortune. Moreover, it is only when the men of the chorus are persuaded by Antigone's song that Oedipus begins to narrate in a "more justice-pleading fashion" (*diakaiologikôteron*). The scholiast's interpretation is significant. First, he recognizes a positive aesthetic ("charm") in having the female character Antigone sing a song which indicates her and her father's misfortune. Second, the scholiast confirms the persuasive power of song, for it is after the chorus men have been "persuaded" (*peithontai*) by pity for this misfortune that Oedipus begins to defend himself. Antigone's lyrics appeal both to the chorus men's reason (by insisting that Oedipus committed his acts uncon-

[12] Maas (1962), 53–54.

[13] Hall (1999), 109. See also Battezzato (2005b), 156.

[14] The full Greek text reads: κρεῖττον γάρ, φασίν, εὐθέως τῷ δικαιολογικῷ χρήσασθαι τὸν Οἰδίπουν πρὸς αὐτούς· ἀλλὰ τὰ πράγματα αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἐν καιρῷ ἐστιν ἀλλ' ἐν δυσπραγίᾳ, ὥστε ἐπαφρόδιτον εἶναι αὐτοῖς τὴν ἐλεεινολογίαν, καὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρόσωπον ἡ Ἀντιγόνη πληροῖ. ἐπεὶ μέντοι οὗτοι οὕτω πείθονται, τότε δικαιολογικώτερον καὶ ὥσπερ ἀπολογούμενος ἐκφέρει τὰ ἑξῆς ὁ Οἰδίπους (V. de Marco 1952: ad 237).

sciously, 239–240) and their emotions (by appealing to pity, 241). Her song acts as a focalizing prelude to Oedipus' speech, not only preparing the chorus for the topic of his plea, but also signifying that they should not dismiss what he will say, but take him seriously. Third, the song is also in the woman's self-interest, for it is only by convincing the male chorus of the truth of their situation that Antigone and her father can be rescued from endless wandering.[15]

For an audience, another implication of identification with a singer is the potential for confusion and contradiction, since two actors in the same play can express opposing views of the same subject, based on their personal experience. In *Ion*, for example, Ion's opening song to Apollo, a god who has always protected him, contrasts sharply with Creusa's monody which narrates her rape by the same god. In the interpretation of Stanley Hoffer, Ion's song indicates the boy's unreflective participation in the ritualized control of violence, whereas Creusa's expresses the uncontrolled physical endurance of violence. In Hoffer's words,

> Ion's monody (82–183) ends with the emblematic action of his threatening to shoot the birds who would soil the temple; in short, he protects purity through violence and death.... Finally, lurking behind the natural setting and the stage actions is Ion's ambiguous presentation of his status as a temple slave, an attitude that combines naive contentment with wistful longing, and that elegantly prepares us for his disturbing, moving encounter with Creusa.[16]

Ion's daily routine consists of aiming his bow at birds which, in his opinion, would foul the temple of Apollo with their droppings (*Ion* 154–180). One of these aviary intruders is a mother bird, searching to build a nest for its young (170–172), which Ion drives away with arrows, but does not kill (173–176)—a pathetic parallel to the story of Creusa and her inability to rear the infant Ion. Ion's lyrics exude a naive ignorance of the violence he commits, but this is not surprising for a boy who has lived in a temple all his life and been deprived of a supervised

[15] Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* was performed posthumously, probably in 401—only about a decade after the Euripidean plays considered here. Perhaps this 'focalizing' use of women's song discussed here was a convention that developed within the genre of tragedy in the last decade or so of the fifth century; or maybe (though this is impossible to prove) Sophocles in his *Oedipus at Colonus* was imitating a Euripidean use of women's song. I thank Patricia Easterling for bringing the passage of the Sophoclean scholiast to my attention.

[16] Hoffer (1996), 289, 291.

childhood in the *polis*, not to mention secure knowledge of his paternity. In contrast, Creusa's lyrics divulge a personal history of suffering sexual violence. Her songs unveil a hidden secret (her rape) of which only she and Apollo have secure knowledge, in sharp distinction to the lyrics of Ion, whose innocence is part and parcel of his lack of knowledge—even a lack of awareness, as Hoffer would argue—of the innate violence in his day-to-day activities.

A related possibility for confusion and contradiction is that, when unsympathetic characters sing, the theater audience might be placed in the uncomfortable position of pitying someone they have grown to hate (e.g., Polymestor's song after his blinding in *Hecuba).* To this end, Monica Cyrino has argued for the existence in Euripides of 'lyric space':

> [...] in which the singing character is represented as being in a position of greater vulnerability than that of a responding speaker, and whose status is thereby emphasized as being subordinate. [...] Euripides has designed the female singer's lyric mode to evoke a specific response from the listeners, to excite their sympathy for her plight.[17]

I agree in principle with Cyrino's analysis that a 'lyric space' exists which advertizes a singer's vulnerability in the immediate dramatic situation. However, it is not always the case that a male listener is, by virtue of his sex, less vulnerable in the situation. For example, in the rescue plots of *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*, Orestes and Menelaus may be equally or more vulnerable than the women, given the women's long-term endurance in captivity. Furthermore, the men's rescue of the women is contingent upon the women's leading role in devising the escape plot.

The Epirrhematic Amoibaion *and the Recognition Duet*

Four plays from the last decade of Euripides' life contain recognition scenes written as duets called *epirrhematic amoibaia*, in which one party sings in lyrics, and another responds in spoken iambic trimeters.[18] These plays are *Iphigenia in Tauris, Helen, Ion*, and the fragmentary *Hyp-*

[17] Cyrino (1998), 82–83.

[18] See Schadewaldt (1926) and Popp (1971) for thorough discussions of the form of the *amoibaion* in extant tragedy.

sipyle.[19] In these four duets, the two parties are actors, and in each case, a female character sings and a male character speaks. The lyric meter sung by the female protagonists in these duets is the language of persuasive truth-telling, and such songs can even be read as an independent verbal genre characteristic of female communication in tragedy.[20]

A modern analogy is in order here. In the second act of Stephen Sondheim's 1979 musical *Sweeny Todd*, the young Tobias Ragg begins the tender duet, "Not While I'm Around," by singing to the older Mrs. Lovett that nothing will harm her as long as he is around to protect her. In between his soaring lyric phrases, Mrs. Lovett interjects (in cackling Cockney speech) that he should stop all his nonsense. Through the medium of song composed in a grand lyrical style hitherto unexplored in the show, Sondheim draws the audience's attention to this young boy, Tobias. Although a minor character so far, Tobias now has the chance to shine. The innocence and youthful naiveté of his words combined with tear-jerking music contrast sharply both with Mrs. Lovett's meat shop where she grinds human bodies into pies, and with the woman herself who is the object of his affection and tells him sharply to stop becoming so hysterical. The duet also marks a transition in the plot; the suddenness of Tobias' song warns the audience that this minor character is a potential threat to the very woman he is serenading, and that he may become—as he indeed does—the person who finally kills Sweeny Todd.

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[19] *Ion* has been variously dated, but an analysis of iambic resolutions suggests 413 as a good guess. *Helen* is securely dated to 412 (Schol. Ar. *Thesm.* 1012, *Ran.* 53), and *Hypsipyle* is later than the lost *Andromeda* (also of 412; Schol. Ar. *Ran.* 57). *Iphigenia in Tauris* is dated closely to *Helen*, based on their similar plots. Euripides died c. 406. Kjeld Matthiessen (1964), 134–138 and 142–143 analysed the metrical structures of the *epirrhematic amoibaia* as the basis for the chronology of *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* with respect to *Ion*. L.P.E. Parker (1997), 206 in an analysis of Aristophanes' *Clouds* 1131ff. (a duet between Strepsiades in lyrics and Socrates in trimeters) drew a comparison to these recognition duets of Euripides and concluded, "Since none of the extant examples is certainly earlier than even the second version of *Clouds*, it can be assumed that Aristophanes is parodying something new in tragedy. But problems remain. Did a *male* character (an old man, perhaps) ever take the singing role in such a scene? Or is Strepsiades behaving in a manner that, on the tragic stage, was peculiar to women? And did the character in Aristophanes' model burst, like Strepsiades, into a song of misguided rejoicing in the presence of a boding and potentially hostile chorus?" The extant second version of *Clouds* dates to 419–417 BCE.

[20] See McClure (1999), 32–69 for her detailed discussion of verbal genres in Greek drama. My use of the term 'verbal genre,' however, allows it to describe a convention of speech peculiar to tragedy; I do not hunt for parallels in real life.

It is safe to say that the Broadway musical is more familiar to the general public than any play by Euripides; but most of the general public are unaware that in *Sweeny Todd*, Sondheim reproduced (intentionally or not) a dramatic form quite common in tragedy: the *epirrhematic amoibaion*. Though we may never know exactly how this musical juxtaposition sounded on the Attic stage, Sondheim's variation on it is a clever approximation, especially in the effects it produces on the audience's sense of focus. There is one crucial difference, however, between Sondheim's duet and Euripides: the gendered arrangement of a male singer against a female speaker, though perfectly fitting the dramatic context of the Broadway musical, never occurs in Euripides, nor in all of extant tragedy.

The standard interpretation, dating back to the nineteenth century, of the gender-specific pattern of female singer against male speaker in Euripides' duets, has been that the lyrics reflect the heightened emotional state of the female, and the trimeters represent the calm rationality of the male.[21] While emotion is clearly an important element of these Euripidean duets, it does not automatically follow that emotion *per se* is negative and that the woman is out of control, and that the man exercises a calming influence. After all, how does one decide whether a singer in a tragic duet is 'in control' or not? A good criterion

[21] Frederick Paley (1874), ad *Helen* 631 observed that "[Gottfried Hermann] remarks [...] that Menelaus, as a man of dignity, and having no other cause of joy than the having got his true wife in place of an *eidôlon* is less profuse in his expressions of satisfaction than Helen, to whom the return of Menelaus was all in all." Charles Jerram (1896), 73 described the young Ion as "less violently moved, being on the whole contented with his lot, and possessing a man's firmness and self-control." In more recent decades, Richard Kannicht (1969), 175 observed: "In dieser metrischen Unterscheidung ist in der Regel die Darstellung einer unterschiedlichen Intensität der Emotionen intendiert, in den Anagnorisisamoibaia immer im Sinn eines Kontrastes zwischen der unkontrollierteruptiven weiblichen und der mehr oder weniger bewußt beherrschten männlichen Reaktion auf das Ereignis der Wiedervereinigung." Ester Cerbo (1989), 40 described Euripides' *epirrhematic amoibaia* as structures with "una innovazione tipicamente euripidea," in which "il constrasto della resa metrica (lirica/non lirica) contribuisce a sottolineare maggiormente il contrasto di emozionalità tra i due esecutori: il personaggio più calmo e riflessivo (in genere il personaggio maschile, più raramente il corifeo) esegue i 3*ia*, il protagonista (generalmente femminile), invece, esprime con i docmi la sua agitazione ed eccitazione, concludendo spesso l'amebeo con una breve ma intensa monodia." Monica Cyrino (1998), 88 wrote: "In each of these lyric exchanges, an emotionally and sometimes even physically unsettled female character sings a metrically complex song, which is in turn commented upon and responded to by a more 'rational' speaker of iambic trimeter. Each case is marked, with more or less irony, by the female singer's complete absorption in her own plight, almost to the point of distraction."

might be if the speaking character attempts to silence the singer—which is exactly what happens in the recognition scene from Sophocles' *Electra*, where female emotions expressed in lyrics threaten exposure of a plot being formed in secret, and male trimeters try to arrest that emotion. A similar effect is found in the Cassandra scene of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, in which Cassandra's maddened, god-driven utterances are paired with the male chorus' attempt to calm her down and their gradual recognition that the Trojan princess does indeed know the horrors of the history of the House of Atreus.[22]

However, this is not the scenario in the Euripidean recognition duets. Neither Orestes and Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, nor Helen and Menelaus in *Helen* express a concern for silence, or a worry that they might be overheard by their captors. Similarly, Creusa and Ion, and Hypsipyle and her sons are overjoyed to discover the truth of their relationships to each other, and their reunions mark the end of their dramas, when there is no need for them to hide their feelings. In fact, there is no dramatic reason in the Euripidean duets why the difference in meter should indicate that the male figure is less emotionally involved; in as much as this study argues that persuasion is one of the goals of women's song in recognition situations, Euripidean men have very noticeable emotional reactions to women's words and encourage women to keep singing, rather than try to calm them down.

Instead of looking for a stark difference in levels of emotion between the sexes, this study proposes to examine what lyric accomplishes, or what purpose it serves in the dramatic situations. Three main uses of song will emerge. First, song is the voice of a woman's knowledge based on her private experience, specifically memories of the abuse of her body. Second, instead of merely highlighting the emotion of the singer, song appeals to the emotions of the audience—in particular, the stage audience consisting of the woman's male kin—in ways that trimeter speech could not; therefore, song has a truth-telling power necessary for persuasion. Third, song confirms the female singer's status as vulnerable, yet simultaneously and paradoxically inverts power relations,

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22 Metrically, the Cassandra scene in *Agamemnon* is not a complete *epirrhematic amoibaion*. The old men of the chorus do hold on to iambic trimeters (whether one imagines they were sung, chanted, or spoken) until line 1140 (halfway through Cassandra's songs), but eventually switch into dochmiacs. Nonetheless, this scene seems to me the *locus classicus* for the standard interpretation of musical exchanges between male and female.

giving the singer the ability to inspire pity and exert persuasive force over a man.

Some might object and argue that the recognition duets simply follow convention. The pattern of a singing female character vs. a speaking male character (both played by actors) is a well established one in Euripides; there are seven *epirrhematic amoibaia* in extant Euripides of this pattern, and four of these seven are the recognition duets.[23] Furthermore, there are no examples in all of extant tragedy of *epirrhematic amoibaia* with a male character singing and a female character speaking.[24] Nor are there examples of choral entrances (*parodoi*) in which men share a lyric duet with a female chorus. Some might argue further that it was customary at the original tragic performance to hire only one actor with singing abilities, and that therefore the *epirrhematic amoibaion* is designed to accommodate a 'star' singer (the protagonist) on the one hand, and a fine actor (but not a capable singer) on the other. This would lead to the conclusion that the female characters sing because they are, from the beginning, the playwright's main focus and the title role of the play. However, two objections can be raised to this simple explanation. First, Euripides was certainly capable of hiring two actors who could sing, as evidenced by *Ion*, which has two singing roles, both of which have their own monodies; and other plays (*Hecuba, Trojan Women, Electra, Phoenician Women*) feature lyric duets in which two actors sing.[25] Second, even in plays where only one actor is needed to perform all the singing roles, this does not require that the protagonist (or title role) does the singing. In *Heracles* and *Orestes*, for example, it is the non-title roles (Amphitryon and the Phrygian slave) who have lyric moments. Interestingly, these two plays have male lead roles; but although he denied these male leads a song, Euripides did not use female lyrics as exclusive substitutes, but gave lyrics to other male characters, even though there were female roles (Megara in *Heracles*—for the first half of the play, at any rate—and Electra in *Orestes*) who could have

[23] See Table 1 and Table 2 in Chapter 3 for a fuller illustration of this point.

[24] The closest thing to it is Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 1407 ff., with Clytemnestra responding in trimeters to the male chorus' lyrics (note this is a chorus, not an actor's role), but gradually her meter develops beyond trimeters. Even so, this arrangement might reflect the gender distortion in the play.

[25] *Hecuba* includes a lyric duet at 117–215 between Polyxena and Hecuba; *Trojan Women* 577–607 is a lyric duet or *kommos* between Andromache and Hecuba; *Electra* ends with both Orestes and Electra in a lyric iambic exchange with the chorus, lines 1177–1232; and at *Phoenician Women* 1539–1581, Antigone and Oedipus sing a lyric lament.

taken a greater singing role. In *Heracles*, Megara does not sing at all; in *Orestes*, Electra sings with the chorus in the *parodos* and in the murder of Helen scene, but does not have (or rather, originally did not have) a monody.[26] This indicates that Euripides always had a choice about distributing lyric passages between male and female roles, and that he was not as tied to convention (or what we assume was a female-preferred convention of lyric) as one might suppose.

Even if Euripides was working within dramatic conventions, that did not prevent him from having specific dramatic agendas for the women he placed in singing roles. An examination of each of the four duets in some detail can offer a subtle and nuanced interpretation of them, and thereby explicate the meaning of their song as women's language.

Iphigenia in Tauris

The *Iphigenia in Tauris* is an 'escape-tragedy' in which an abducted Greek princess lives in a barbarian land ruled by a despotic king, is reunited with her long-lost male relative, and plans an elaborate escape back to Greece.[27] In this play, the princess in question is Iphigenia, eldest daughter of king Agamemnon of Argos and his wife Clytmenestra (sister of the famous Helen of Sparta). At the start of the Trojan War, Agamemnon agreed to sacrifice Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis in order to obtain fair winds for the Greek fleet leaving the bay of Aulis. He lured his daughter to Aulis on the pretence of offering her in marriage to the Greek warrior Achilles, but instead sacrificed her like a deer to the goddess. But unbeknownst to Agamemnon, the goddess abducted the virgin Iphigenia and transported her to the land of the Taurians (near the Black Sea) where she became priestess for a dire cult of Artemis that practised human sacrifice—specifically, they sacrificed all Greeks who happened to arrive on those barbarian shores. In Argos, Clytemnestra murdered Agamemnon upon his return from Troy (in retaliation for the ritual murder of their daughter), but their only son, Orestes, killed Clytemnestra in retaliation for the murder of his father. Pursued by his mother's Furies, Orestes went to Delphi to

[26] I agree with the assessment of Mark Damen (1990) that what survives as Electra's monody at *Orestes* 960–1012 was originally a choral ode.

[27] For a detailed study of the Euripidean 'escape-tragedy,' see Matthew Wright (2005).

seek purification from the god Apollo, and then to Athens, where the goddess Athena presided over a courtroom trial in which Orestes was acquitted of bloodguilt. Yet when some Furies refused to accept the verdict and continued to torment Orestes, Apollo revealed that he would be released from madness if he travelled to the land of the Taurians and brought back to Greece the sacred statue of Artemis from her temple there. When Orestes and his comrade (and cousin) Pylades arrive in the Taurian land, they are arrested and sentenced to death, and none other than Iphigenia has the duty of preparing them to be ritually sacrificed. Orestes and Pylades conceal their identity, although they can tell that Iphigenia is a Greek (as are the young women of the chorus, temple slaves who were captured from Greece). In the process of narrating a letter which Pylades agrees to take back to Argos if his life is spared, Orestes recognizes Iphigenia's identity and reveals his own. The three of them then plan to steal Artemis' statue (in fulfilment of Apollo's oracle), escape from the Taurians' wicked king Thoas, and return to Greece.

Iphigenia's song in the recognition duet of *Iphigenia in Tauris* allows her to recollect a crucial moment of her past—one that involved the physical abuse of her body—and to do so in an authoritative and persuasive manner, with the result that she solves a narrative dilemma that Orestes needs to unravel. Song is the medium for the woman's explanation of her individual knowledge, in a truth-telling fashion that is convincing and necessary for the plot to continue. Yet at the same time it highlights the woman's vulnerability in the current crisis, thus setting the foundation for a new plot in which she must use her cunning to effect a rescue. The duet is the culmination of a series of invocations of the sacrifice at Aulis, that defining moment of Iphigenia's mythical persona, the one event which any member of an audience would know and associate with her. Yet within the drama, Orestes knows very little about that event; he says he was not there (855) and clearly thought she had been killed (564). Iphigenia is the only person who can know the truth about whether the sacrifice happened or not, and it is noteworthy that her details of that event vary with each of her recollections.

In the prologue, Iphigenia lends a full account of what led to her sacrifice: the seer Calchas' prophecy, the vow Agamemnon had made (i.e., to offer Artemis the fairest product of the year), and Odysseus' trickery. The physical moment of the sacrifice, however, is glossed over in two lines: *elthousa d'Aulid' hê talain' hyper pyras / metarsia lêphtheis' ekainomên xiphei* ("Having come to Aulis and been lifted high over the

altar, I—unfortunate—was ready for the knife," 26–27). Her memory of the event is limited to brief sensations of being raised, and of a knife. The use of the imperfect passive *ekainomên*, from *kainô* ("to kill"), implies an action that was on the point of happening, but was never completed; therefore Iphigenia does not say that she ever felt the knife, though she clearly knew it was there.

In the *parodos*, Iphigenia's memories of Aulis change their focus; the event is linked to her having been born unlucky from the start (203–210), but there is more emphasis on her father's culpability (she is a victim *patrôiai lôbai*, "for a father's outrage," 211), and on the false promise of marriage that led her to Aulis (214–217). However, no altar or knife, or any other element of the moment of the sacrifice, is mentioned to the chorus of maidens.

The first time Orestes learns the truth about Aulis is when Iphigenia repeats to Pylades the contents of her letter. When Orestes overhears her at 783 (told in iambic trimeters), her summary of the events is brief:

λέγ' οὕνεκ' ἔλαφον ἀντιδοῦσά μου θεὰ
Ἄρτεμις ἔσωσέ μ', ἣν ἔθυσ' ἐμὸς πατήρ,
δοκῶν ἐς ἡμᾶς ὀξὺ φάσγανον βαλεῖν,
ἐς τήνδε δ' ᾤκισ' αἶαν.

Say that the goddess Artemis saved me, substituting in my place a deer
which my father sacrificed when he thought
he was striking his sharp knife into me;
and she settled me in this land. *Iphigenia in Tauris* 783–786

The focal point of this brief recollection is Agamemnon and his (deluded) thoughts, not what it was like for Iphigenia. She mentions the sharp knife, then cuts immediately to her arrival in the Taurian land. Thus she gives only enough detail for it to be convincing to the person who she hopes will receive her message, namely Orestes—who, of course, receives it on the spot and immediately reveals his identity.

It is not until the recognition duet that Iphigenia re-lives the events at Aulis from her perspective and in more pathetic detail. She begins her song with tears of joy and renders thanks to Mycenae for preserving Orestes' life (828–849). It is Orestes at 850 who—in spoken trimeters—changes the topic of the duet to more mournful tones, observing that their lives really have been miserable, despite their noble birth.

ΟΡ. γένει μὲν εὐτυχοῦμεν, ἐς δὲ συμφορὰς,
ὦ σύγγον', ἡμῶν δυστυχὴς ἔφυ βίος.
ΙΦ. ἐγᾦδ' ἁ μέλεος, οἶδ', ὅτε φάσγανον
δέρᾳ 'φῆκέ μοι μελεόφρων πατήρ.

ΟΡ. οἴμοι· δοκῶ γὰρ οὐ παρών σ᾽ ὁρᾶν ἐκεῖ.
ΙΦ. ἀνυμέναιος, ⟨ὦ⟩ σύγγον᾽, Ἀχιλλέως
  ἐς κλισίαν λέκτρων δόλιον ἀγόμαν·
  παρὰ δὲ βωμὸν ἦν δάκρυα καὶ γόοι.
  φεῦ φεῦ χερνίβων ἐκεί⟨νων· οἴμοι⟩
ΟΡ. ᾤμωξα κἀγὼ τόλμαν ἣν ἔτλη πατήρ.
ΙΦ. ἀπάτορ᾽ ἀπάτορα πότμον ἔλαχον·
  ἄλλα δ᾽ ἐξ ἄλλων κυρεῖ 865
  δαίμονος τύχᾳ τινός. 867
ΟΡ. εἰ σόν γ᾽ ἀδελφόν, ὦ τάλαιν᾽, ἀπώλεσας. 866

ORESTES: In birth we are fortunate, but with respect to our circumstances, sister, our life has been unfortunate.
IPHIGENIA: (singing) *I know, unfortunate I, I know how*
  my harsh father laid the knife against my throat.
ORESTES: *Oimoi!* I can see you, though I was not even there.
IPHIGENIA: *Never a bride, oh my brother, I was led*
  to a false bed of marriage with Achilles.
  Beside the altar there were tears and wailing.
  Pheu Pheu! for those libations, oimoi!
ORESTES: I too groan for what our father dared.
IPHIGENIA: *The father I was given was no father*;
  one thing follows another
  by the fortune of some divinity.
ORESTES: Oh, if you had killed your brother! *Iphigenia in Tauris* 850–867

Here at last, for the first time since the prologue, Iphigenia remembers what she physically endured: the altar, the tears, the wailing, the libations, and the father who was more than ready to kill her. Critically, moreover, she remembers—she knows (*oid'*)—her father laid the knife against her throat; this detail which was mentioned in two words in the prologue (*ekainomên xiphei*, 27) and in two words in the letter (*oxy phasganon*, 785), is now explicated with fuller resonance. The song expresses her exclusive knowledge based on the suffering of her body as sacrificial victim, with an emphasis on her personal memories (*egôid' ha meleos, oid'*), not on what Agamemnon "thought" (*dokôn*) he was doing, as in line 785.

Why does Iphigenia decide to communicate this information now? Even though Orestes and Iphigenia have already recognized each other through mention of tokens, there is still one element Orestes does not know about his sister's history. In the sense that Iphigenia's sacrifice at Aulis was the initial cause of the chain of events which led to the present crisis of Orestes being chased to the land of the Taurians, the question 'did her sacrifice ever happen or not' is a pertinent one for the cohesion

of the narrative. In the lyric moment, Iphigenia confirms that the sacrifice at Aulis did—and did not—happen. Only she knows the truth: that although she was saved, her father was certainly ready and willing to kill her. In this, she solves one of the dilemmas in the causality of the Orestes myth: if Iphigenia was never killed at all, did Clytemnestra kill Agamemnon for nothing? And if Clytemnestra killed Agamemnon for nothing, how does that effect the justice of Orestes' matricide and his pursuit by the Furies? Iphigenia's knowledge of those past events at Aulis justifies her mother's actions at some level—Agamemnon *would* have committed the ritual murder of his daughter, and believed that he had done it.

Interestingly, this recognition duet is largely in the female voice. While Iphigenia sings 69 lines of lyric (mainly dochmiacs), Orestes interjects only seven iambic trimeters, so that the scene reads as though Orestes were hardly replying at all.[28] When he does speak, Orestes' emotional involvement in Iphigenia's narrative is nevertheless apparent; he is not exercising a 'rational' influence over her or attempting to calm his sister down. With an *oimoi*, he feels he can see the sacrifice in all its gore, even though he was not there (855), and he makes a similar cry (*ôimôxa*) for their father's daring (862). His remark at 866, "Oh, if you had killed your brother!" indicates further how he is affected by Iphigenia's story, inasmuch as her recollections lead him to the horrible realization that events in the house of Atreus (including the matricide) continue to repeat themselves in a dreadful typological manner, and that, in this case, the ritual slaughter to Artemis of a child of Agamemnon at the hands of kin—a son at his sister's hands, this time—similarly did not (but almost did) happen.

The authoritative power of Iphigenia's lyrics are paradoxically linked to a clear self-awareness regarding her own vulnerability. Though she has explicit insight into the past, she can foresee no apparent security in the present. Her song moves from joy to sad recollection, and finally (875–899, a large portion at the song's end) to nervous worry about how she might help her brother escape death in this barbarian land. In this final emotive outburst, Iphigenia envisions herself and her brother (the "two sole descendants of Atreus," 899) as vulnerable, needing rescue, but unsure what means could provide escape or what event might present itself. Iphigenia does not at first describe Orestes as her rescuer,

[28] For a detailed discussion of the meters used in the recognition duets, see Ester Cerbo, who describes these duets as having "la maggiore varietà metrica, grazie all'inserimento di *cola* eterogenei prima non utilizzati" (Cerbo 1989, 40).

but rather asks herself what fortune can come *her* way (*tis tycha moi synkyrêsei?* 875), and what path *she* might find (*heuromena … pempsô*) to send Orestes back to Argos from exile (876–879). She addresses her own *psychê* as the one who must discover the answers to those questions (881–882), and by the end of the song, she sings of herself and Orestes as equally vulnerable (897–899). By taking the lead in asking such questions, she lays the groundwork for a plot that will require her to devise a cunning and unorthodox escape.

Iphigenia's song is her opportunity to reveal her secret personal experiences to a brother who requires them. Furthermore, there is no indication that Iphigenia is lying; she presents her memories in a manner geared towards convincing Orestes of their veracity. When she finishes singing (actually, she is interrupted by Pylades), she begins to interrogate Orestes in iambic trimeters at some length, wanting to know all about life at home (including Electra), Pylades' family, and the matricide. Orestes has answers of his own which only he can share: news of people, events, marriages, deaths. Orestes gives the information in trimeters, not song; more importantly, he answers evasively or curtly. Euripides' concern in this trimeter scene, having finished with the lyric mode, is thus less with the memories or reactions of Iphigenia than with Orestes' unwillingness to probe too deeply into his own personal history, particularly the matricide. The man does not burst into song to reveal any of his individual knowledge; instead, at 924–928, he would rather be silent about how he killed their mother, and when he objects to being asked why their mother killed Agamemnon, Iphigenia herself agrees to be silent on that matter. Orestes does not ask Iphigenia further details about her sacrifice at Aulis. The audience, of course, knows the whole story from hearing Iphigenia's prologue, but for Orestes, her lyric song in the duet has answered satisfactorily all the questions he might have had about her experience, so that now the plot can continue.

Helen

Euripides' *Helen* is also an 'escape-tragedy'; in this case, the abducted Greek princess is Helen of Sparta, the barbarian land she lives in is Egypt, the despotic king is named Theoclymenus, and the long-lost male relative she is reunited with is her husband, Menelaus, whose death and funeral they 'fake' in order to escape back to Greece. The

premise of this increasingly popular play is that Helen of Sparta never actually went to Troy, but that a copy (an *eidôlon* or "image") of her was sent there, while the 'real' Helen was taken to Egypt by the god Hermes. The entire Trojan War was fought for a 'phantom.' In the course of the play, Helen takes refuge at the tomb of the former king of Egypt, Proteus. She is visited by the Greek solider Teucer, who informs her that the Trojan War is over and that Menelaus is leading the phantom Helen back to Sparta. Then she is reunited with Menelaus, who is shipwrecked on the Egyptian shore and reduced to rags. In front of a sympathetic chorus of fellow captive Greek women, they plan an elaborate escape from Egypt's new king, Theoclymenus (Proteus' son), who for years has been pressuring Helen to marry him (hence her taking refuge at his father's tomb); and they manage this escape with the complicity of the priestess Theonoe, the clairvoyant sister of Theoclymenus.

The recognition duet at *Helen* 625–699, as in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, allows the female singer (who, again, has most of the lines) to explain her private history. Helen always sings lyrics (mostly dochmiacs, with some cretic elaborations); Menelaus speaks in trimeters, but occasionally breaks into lyrics himself (though there is considerable debate as to which lines those are).[29] In the interrogation half of the duet, Helen relates information about her past which, since the prologue, has been known to the audience, but which needs explaining to Menelaus as a kind of verbal proof. In this play, the theme of verbal proof is

[29] The recognition duet of *Helen* is a hopelessly vexed passage. Of the lyric lines in this passage, Murray (1909) assigns eight to Menelaus (639–640, 642–645, 654–655, 659, 692–693). Dale (1967) reassigns most to Helen, but retains 659 ("and [seeming] to have gone to the towers of wretched Ilium") and 692–693 ("These things destroyed both you and thousands of bronze-weaponed Danaans") for Menelaus; according to Dale, 659 denotes Menelaus' ending of the first part of the duet (the 'Recognition Proper'), and 692–693 the end of his 'Interrogation' (Dale's terms). Dale also assigns the trimeters 646–647 to Menelaus, whereas Murray followed Willamowitz in giving them to the Chorus (the mss. LP attribute the lines to Helen). Willink (1989) follows Murray in assigning 642–645 and 654–655 to Menelaus; he also assigns 632–635 to Menelaus (Dale and Murray gave them to Helen). Diggle (1994a) follows Dale in most respects, except that he gives Menelaus 642–643 ("A god is driving (us) towards another fortune better than this one"), and gives Helen 692–693. I follow Diggle (1994a), who is the most consistent in assigning trimeters to the male. L.P.E. Parker (1997), 429, in a discussion of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* and the parody of *Helen* 625ff., goes so far as to describe the original passage (sc. the recognition duet of *Helen)* as one in which "one might suspect Euripides of parodying himself."

paramount. The disappearance of the Helen phantom in the previous scene has assured Menelaus of the real Helen's identity, but the question of her fidelity still needs to be answered, in his mind, through the duet. There is no denying that she left his house, but the willingness or unwillingness of that departure, even with a god's help, needs to be established. In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the operative question was, was Iphigenia sacrificed or not? In *Helen*, the operative question is, did Helen remain faithful, or did she not? Menelaus admits that Helen never went to Troy, yet still must ask by what means she left his home in the first place: *pros theôn, domôn pôs tôn emôn apestalês?* ("By the gods, how did you depart my house?" 658–660). Even though the memory is so painful for her that she says she spits it out (664), Helen must defend herself and insists that she did not leave for any adulterous purpose:

οὐκ ἐπὶ βαρβάρου λέκτρα νεανία
πετομένας κώπας, πετομένου δ' ἔρω-
τος ἀδίκων γάμων

HELEN: (singing) *It was not to the bed of a young barbarian man*
borne on the beating of oars, on the beating of desire
for a lawless union… *Helen* 666–668

Here her lyrics take on the power of an oath, and they precede verbal proof; for she narrates the story of her abduction under the power of two gods—Hermes, who physically took her to Egypt, and Hera, who requested it—thereby giving Menelaus further evidence of her chastity. The duet then makes an abrupt shift in topic: Helen shares her news of the family, as she had learned it from the arrival of Teucer during the prologue of the play. She mourns the suicide of her mother Leda, and tells Menelaus that their daughter Hermione is still without husband or children (685–690). This is information Menelaus does not know and is eager to learn. Finally, having shared what she knows of the distant past and the present, she ends this duet by returning to her defense, with her song as the voice of her body that was abducted by divine power:

ἐμὲ δὲ πατρίδος ἀπο⟨πρὸ⟩ κακόποτμον ἀραῖ-
ον ἔβαλε θεὸς ἀπὸ πόλεος ἀπό τε σέθεν,
ὅτε μέλαθρα λέχεά τ' ἔλιπον οὐ λιποῦσ'
ἐπ' αἰσχροῖς γάμοις.

694 ἀπο⟨πρὸ⟩ Diggle: ἄπο L ἀραῖον Diggle: ἀραίαν L

HELEN: (singing) *But me, ill-fated and accursed, far away from my fatherland*
the god cast me, from my city and from you,
when I left my house and my bed, yet not leaving them
for any shameful union. *Helen* 694–697

Throughout the duet, Menelaus asks questions, and his pathetic responses (such as *ô deinoi logoi*, 672; and *ô tlamon*, 681) indicate that he is not uninterested in Helen's story, nor is he attempting to silence her or calm her.[30] His interrogation suggests the opposite: that he is intensely interested in Helen's emotional revelation of her past (particularly since it will determine their present and future), and must encourage her—not calm her down—to delve deeper into her memory in order to learn what he wants to know.[31] The result is that Menelaus is convinced of Helen's chastity with regard to her abduction by Paris. What is curious, however, is that the truth-telling power of her song does not extend to convincing Menelaus of her chastity in Egypt, as evidenced in the subsequent scene at line 794–796 when Helen assures him she was never touched by Theoclymenus. When Menelaus frankly asks for proof, Helen points to Proteus' tomb where she was a suppliant; the physical object is persuasive in itself, and convinces Menelaus more immediately than Helen's lyric narration of her abduction, for which there was no physical proof outside of her own insistent recollection of private suffering.

As in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, after the lyric moment is over, Helen begins to interrogate Menelaus, specifically about how he was saved from Troy. She qualifies her interest in asking as follows:

ὅπως δ' ἐσώθης, ὦ τάλας, Τροίας ἄπο,
κέρδος μὲν οὐδὲν εἰδέναι, πόθος δέ τις
τὰ τῶν φίλων φίλοισιν αἰσθέσθαι κακά.

HELEN: But how you were saved, unfortunate one, from Troy,
there is no gain in knowing, yet friends have a desire
to learn friends' sufferings. *Helen* 762–764

[30] *Helen* 681 ends ὦ τλῆμον in the manuscripts, but was Doricized into ὦ τλᾶμον by Matthiae, and adopted by Diggle in his text. The second half of this *antilabe* is usually assigned to Menelaus. Diggle's text assigns 682, τλάμονα τλάμον' ὧδ' ἐπέλασ' Αἰγύπτῳ to Helen; Willink (1989), 66 suggests that Menelaus repeats the vocative τλᾶμον for the first two syllables of 682, followed by Helen in *antilabe*, τλάμον' ὧδ' ἐπέλασ' Αἰγύπτῳ. Clearly there is no easy solution.

[31] Kannicht (1969), 175 suggested that Menelaus' trimeters expressed calm rationality, or the "mehr oder weniger bewußt beherrschten männlichen Reaktion auf das Ereignis der Wiedervereinigung." Trimeters clearly have a distinctly different force than lyrics; but Kannicht attributes the distinction to gendered categories of emotion in this instance, whereas I would argue Menelaus uses trimeters because it is Helen's personal memories, and not his, that are on display. This does not preclude both Helen and Menelaus from being emotional.

What Helen desires is a shift in the focus of their communication. She has sung her song and shared her private memories; now she demands equal time by insisting it is her turn to hear and evaluate Menelaus' past woes. But like Orestes in *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Menelaus is evasive, and rather than sing a song of his own—although by a brilliant *praeteritio* he manages to divulge an impressive string of geographical names (766–769)—he refuses to comment at length:

οὐ γὰρ ἐμπλήσαιμί σ' ⟨ἂν⟩
μύθων, λέγων δ' ἄν σοι κάκ' ἀλγοίην ἔτι
πάσχων τ' ἔκαμνον· δὶς δὲ λυπηθεῖμεν ἄν.

MENELAUS: For I would not give you your fill
of words, and in telling you these evils I would suffer still,
as I did when I experienced them; and our grief would be doubled.
Helen 769–771[32]

In other plays close in date to *Helen* (such as *Phoenician Women* and *Ion)*, Euripides gave lyrics to more than one actor. This indicates that Euripides could easily have written for Menelaus a quick song, like his wife's, in which he narrated his toils. Instead, the playwright chose to design a Menelaus who is reluctant to dwell on his own past, even for the benefit of his wife. More importantly, this is a Menelaus who has no exclusive knowledge that he needs to prove to his wife, since he—unlike Helen—is not obliged to convince her of his fidelity or any other aspect of his identity. This absence of need for song in this context points to the power differential which Euripides has created between man and wife. Furthermore, Euripides has also invented a Helen who is aware of this power differential; she acknowledges the pointlessness of probing Menelaus' memory, even before she asks him, and endorses his reticence with the comment that his answer is better than her question (772). But though there is a difference in power in this husband-wife relationship, both are vulnerable in the dramatic situation, as is made clear when Helen goes on to describe the danger facing Menelaus as a Greek on Theoclymenus' shores. If anything, Menelaus is more vulnerable than Helen, in that Theoclymenus will surely kill him, whereas Helen has managed to live in Egypt unharmed for seventeen years.

[32] Dale (1967) supported Pearson's emendation of οὐ in line 769 to εἰ, "*If* I were to give you your fill of words, in the telling I would still suffer" etc. Diggle's OCT brackets line 771.

Here another comparison can be made to the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, in which the woman's lyrics in the duet had the connotation of vulnerability, but the levels of vulnerability of both male and female characters in the immediate dramatic context was fairly equal, with Iphigenia taking the lead in worrying about her brother's rescue. In *Helen*, the woman does not mention the imminent danger until well after the lyric moment has passed, but when she does, it is again she who initiates some plan for the man's safety. If we accept 780 as genuine (it also appears as *Phoenician Women* 972), Helen conceives of this safety as an escape that does not include her. She tells Menelaus to flee (*pheug'*), expressed as a second person imperative rather than, for instance, a first person plural subjunctive exhortation (which would have included Helen as part of the subject). Later, at 802–805, Menelaus and Helen discuss the possibility that he must leave her behind, and Helen again urges him to flee. However much Helen's lyrics belied an inequality in her marital relationship—the necessity for her to defend her chastity—they do not signify a greater vulnerability in the dramatic situation, since in fact Helen, who continues to rely on the power of supplication at Proteus' tomb, appears to be less vulnerable than Menelaus in Egypt.

A final comparison is in order between the recognition duet in *Helen* and the *agôn* between Helen and Hecuba in *Trojan Women*, which was produced a mere three years before *Helen*. At *Trojan Women* 895–965, Helen narrates her abduction and defends her chastity in iambic trimeters before a dubious Menelaus—a similar scenario to the recognition duet in *Helen*. Why are iambic trimeters appropriate for this scenario in the earlier play, but lyric meters for the later play? In *Trojan Women*, Helen's arguments are quite different; whereas in *Helen* she sings her insistence that she was abducted by a god and never left Sparta for any illicit union with Paris, in *Trojan Women* she admits she left in secret from Menelaus' house with Paris, but that the goddess Aphrodite was to blame. She confesses that her adulterous passion was real, but claims it was excusable because the power of the goddess was invincible (*Trojan Women* 938–950). These preposterous arguments are preceded by even more preposterous ones: that if anyone is to blame, it is Hecuba for not killing her son Paris (919–922), and then it is Paris' fault for getting involved in the judgment between the three goddesses (923–931), and above all Helen deserves a crown because her abduction brought great fame to the Greeks (932–937). Although Menelaus is the audience of Helen's defence in both plays, in *Trojan Women* he does not have much to say; the scene is really an *agôn* between Helen and Hecuba, and

afterwards Menelaus drags Helen away with every intention of killing her, even though everyone with a knowledge of mythology knows that Helen will manage to survive. The fact that the scene is an *agôn* is a formal reason why lyric meter was not appropriate; but it could be added that Helen in *Trojan Women* does not defend herself based on private knowledge of her body and its abuse, as she does in *Helen*. Instead, Helen in *Trojan Women* states a case for how her abduction should be interpreted by others. The fact that it is so open to interpretation allows Hecuba to tear her arguments to shreds, retorting that it is folly to believe in stories of gods having beauty contests, or to blame Aphrodite for one's own lawless desires; and if Helen claims she was abducted by force, why did no one in Sparta hear her scream? (*Trojan Women* 969–1001). Audiences of *Helen* in 412 BCE might well have supposed that the Helen they witnessed in *Trojan Women* of 415 BCE was in fact the *eidôlon*-Helen making specious arguments, while the 'real' Helen in the 412 play sings her 'real' defence.

Ion

Like *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*, Euripides' *Ion* ends happily, with a woman and her long-lost male relative returning home together. But in this play, the recognition is delayed until the very end, after the woman has had the opportunity to try (unknowingly) to murder her own son. At the start of *Ion*, we learn that the Athenian princess Creusa (daughter of king Erechtheus) was raped by the god Apollo and bore a son whom she abandoned; the infant was taken by the god Hermes to Delphi, where he was raised by the god Apollo to become a servant of his shrine. The action of the drama takes place when the infant has grown up into a mature boy, old enough to handle a bow and arrow to shoot birds, but young enough not to have worried about leaving the temple to find a wife or begin the life of a citizen. Creusa comes to Delphi with her husband, Xuthus, and a chorus of female slaves, as well as an Old Man who is her most trusted servant. Xuthus and Creusa have no children together, so Xuthus asks Apollo's oracle for advice for their infertility; the oracle responds that Xuthus will meet his 'son' as he exits the oracular chamber. Xuthus runs into none other than the temple servant who was Creusa's infant, assumes that this boy is his son by some youthful fling, names him "Ion," and plans to confirm him as his heir at a banquet. Creusa's slaves overhear and presume this

means Creusa will never have children of her own; the Old Man also describes what he has seen of Xuthus' preparations to name Ion as his heir. Infuriated at the injustice of the world—that she was raped by a god and abandoned her child, and now must accept her husband's bastard as a stepson in her royal house—Creusa decides to poison Ion at the banquet. It all goes horribly wrong—thankfully; Creusa's plot is uncovered, she takes refuge at Apollo's altar, and Ion is about to kill her himself when Apollo's priestess, the Pythia, interrupts them to reveal that Ion is actually Creusa's long-lost son.

In *Ion*, female lyrics are similarly truth-telling and autobiographical, this time appealing to the senses as a source of authority; but the spirit in which the woman recalls her personal memories changes pointedly with the audience of her performance. In her monody at lines 859–922, in front of the chorus and the Old Man, Creusa confesses her rape by Apollo and conveys, in horrific detail, how it felt and what it was like. The narrative is replete with sensory description: the sight of the god's appearance, hair flashing with gold (887–888), his touch on her wrists (891), the sound of her cry for her mother (893), perhaps even the smell of the saffron flowers she had been gathering (889). At the end of her song, the Old Man in stichomythia asks her to repeat the narrative; she does so, but in a more blunt manner. Her phrases *entauth' agôna deinon êgônismetha* ("I struggled there a terrible struggle," 939) and *Phoibôi xynêps' akousa dystênon gamon* ("Against my will I joined with Phoebus in a miserable union," 941) summarize the rape for what it was—a violent physical act, in which she was unwilling—but the trimeter has none of the personalized visions of the lyric, none of the engagement with the senses. Instead, the trimeter conversation focuses largely on her childbirth and abandonment of her baby, including the moving moment when she tells how the infant stretched out his arms to his mother (961).

When Creusa sings in the recognition duet (mainly in dochmiacs), she does a remarkable *volte-face* and validates her rape by Apollo and subsequent childbirth in a positive light. She emphasizes her fertility that was the object of her trip to Delphi in the beginning, exclaiming that she is not barren and not without a child (1463). She is once again obliged to expose the secret of her rape, but for a new purpose: to assure Ion of his noble parentage, and to answer his question (arguably the operative question of the play), "Am I a bastard?" Like *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*, even after the recognition proper has taken place through tokens, there are still issues that need to be resolved between

man and woman, and they can only be answered by the woman's revelation of how and by whom her body was abused in the past.

ΙΩ. αἰαῖ· πέφυκα δυσγενής, μῆτερ; πόθεν;
ΚΡ. ἴστω Γοργοφόνα ΙΩ. τί τοῦτ' ἔλεξας;
ΚΡ. ἃ σκοπέλοις ἐπ' ἐμοῖς
τὸν ἐλαιοφυῆ πάγον
θάσσει ΙΩ. λέγεις μοι σκολιὰ κοὐ σαφῆ τάδε.
ΚΡ. παρ' ἀηδόνιον πέτραν
Φοίβῳ ΙΩ. τί Φοῖβον αὐδᾷς;
ΚΡ. κρυπτόμενον λέχος ηὐνάσθην
ΙΩ. λέγ'· ὡς ἐρεῖς τι κεδνὸν εὐτυχές τέ μοι.
ΚΡ. δεκάτῳ δέ σε μηνὸς ἐν
κύκλῳ κρύφιον ὠδῖν' ἔτεκον Φοίβῳ.
ΙΩ. ὦ φίλτατ' εἰποῦσ', εἰ λέγεις ἐτήτυμα.

ION: Alas! Am I lowly born, mother? Whose?
CREUSA: *The Gorgon Slayer be my witness!* ION: Why did you say this?
CREUSA: *Who, beside my cliffs,*
on the olive-planted hill
sits—ION: You tell me things crooked and untrustworthy.
CREUSA: *By the rock where the nightingale sings,*
With Phoebus—ION: Why do you name Phoebus?
CREUSA: *I lay in a secret bed.*
ION: Speak on, for you're saying something dear and lucky for me.
CREUSA: *And in the tenth cycle of the month,*
I bore you, a secret offspring to Phoebus
ION: Oh, you've spoken the dearest things, if true. *Ion* 1477–1488

Within this newly discovered mother-son relationship, there exists a power differential that obliges Creusa to do some explaining. By this point of the recognition, it is beyond doubt that Ion is Creusa's son, and Ion has nothing to prove to Creusa; she, however, needs to reveal the identity of Ion's father, and she must do it persuasively. Only a chaste woman can know the identity of the father of her child, and here Creusa reveals the truth not out of frustration at a perceived unjust barrenness, as in the earlier scene with the chorus and Old Man, but out of love for that very child she has found again. Gone are the sensory descriptions of what the violence was like, and how it felt; now she invokes the rape as evidence that Ion is not the illegitimate issue of some lowly-born human father, but of divine parentage. Here she calls upon Athena's rock as a verbal proof that her revelations about the circumstances of her rape and Ion's conception are true. This lends her lyrics a truth-telling power, in as much as she summons as witnesses both the place where she was abused (which only she could

know), and the virgin goddess to whom the place was sacred and who thus, by extension, saw it all happen. It is interesting to note that no tragic character ever lies when she or he sings.[33] If one is going to use deception, one uses trimeters. This is exemplified in Creusa's two interactions with Ion: when the two first meet, they are strangers, and Creusa (in iambic trimeter stichomythia) guilefully narrates her own rape by Apollo as though it happened to someone else, a 'friend'. At her second meeting with Ion, after they have recognized each other as mother and son, she uses lyrics to swear the truth about his paternity. In these recognition duets, the woman must convince her male kin of some truth about herself in order for the plot to continue. The men are integral to this project, because they are either capable of rescuing these women, or at least of motivating women to plot an escape, to the point where, as Cyrino has worded it, each woman is "relocated" or "restored to her domestic status."[34]

Hypsipyle

Like *Ion*, the fragmentary duet from *Hypsipyle* contrasts a woman's memories of a painful past experience and the comparatively carefree lives of her son(s). Like *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Helen*, it is also something of an 'escape-tragedy,' with a Greek princess (Hypsipyle) who has been abducted, is reunited with her long lost male relatives (her sons), and is returned home (or at least, we presume so). But instead of living in a barbarian land under a despotic king, Hypsipyle is a slave in a Greek city and owned by a queen who, if not despotic, is at least passionate and angry enough to try to kill her.

The plot of *Hypsipyle*, as far as can be reconstructed, is as follows. Hypsipyle was one of the women of the island of Lemnos, who on one night murdered all their men; Hypsipyle alone spared a man, her father, king Thoas, the son of the god Dionysus. But long before the murders, the Lemnian women were visited by Jason and the Argonauts on their way to Colchis to find the golden fleece; Hypsipyle had a fling with Jason and bore him twin sons, Euneus and Thoas, who apparently

[33] The one possible exception is the chorus of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, who may be lying in their stasimon; but that is in a choral song, and the point here is that no character played by *actors* ever lies while singing.

[34] Cyrino (1998), 92.

went with their father to Colchis. Hypsipyle was then abducted by pirates (apparently on the night she tried to spare her father's life) and was sold into slavery; she was bought by King Lycurgus and Queen Eurydice of Nemea to become the nursemaid for their infant son Opheltes. When the play begins, two strangers arrive at the Nemean palace to ask for shelter; they are none other than Euneus and Thoas, and it is Hypsipyle, as a servant, who welcomes them—but of course, they do not recognize each other as mother and sons. Meanwhile, the Argive army of Adrastus and the 'Seven Against Thebes' is marching through Nemea on its way towards Thebes. The chorus of female neighbors tells Hypsipyle that this is a spectacle worth watching, but the sad heroine is too wrapped up in her own memories to care about an army—that is, until one of the soldiers, the seer Amphiaraus, comes to the palace. Amphiaraus is the one of the Seven whose wife, Eriphyle, was bribed by a necklace from Polyneices to encourage her husband to fight. Amphiaraus needs to find water for the army, so Hypsipyle shows him where there is a spring; but in the process, she lays down her infant charge Opheltes, who is bitten by a snake and dies. The queen Eurydice catches Hypsipyle, ties her up and plans to kill her for murdering the infant; but Amphiaraus arrives in the nick of time, convinces the queen to relent, and founds Panhellenic athletic competitions (the Nemean games) in honour of Opheltes. In the lost parts of the play, Amphiaraus somehow reunites Euneus and Thoas with their mother Hypsipyle—perhaps they compete in the games?—and then departs on his journey towards Thebes.

One of the fortuitous survivals from the last part of this play is the recognition duet between mother and sons (one of whom we presume is a mute role); they interrogate her in trimeter while she responds in song (largely dochmiacs with some cretic elaborations). Hypsipyle begins with her life's history—her time in Lemnos, her capture by pirates, her slavery—all of which she calls "good fortune," presumably because it is all in the past and now has a happy ending:

ΥΨ. αἰαῖ, φυγὰς ἐμέθεν ἃς ἔφυγον,
ὦ τέκνον, εἰ μάθοις, Λήμνου ποντίας,
πολιὸν ὅτι πατέρος οὐκ ἔτεμον κάρα.
ΕΥ. ἦ γάρ σ' ἔταξαν πατέρα σὸν κατακτανεῖν;
ΥΨ. φόβος ἔχει με τῶν τότε κακῶν· ἰὼ
τέκνον, οἷά τε Γοργάδες ἐν λέκτροις
ἔκανον εὐνέτας.
ΕΥ. σὺ δ' ἐξέκλεψας πῶς πόδ' ὥστε μὴ θανεῖν;

ΥΨ. ἀκτὰς βαρυβρόμους ἱκόμαν
ἐπί τ' οἶδμα θαλάσσιον, ὀρνίθων
ἔρημον κοίταν.
ΕΥ. κἀκεῖθεν ἦλθες δεῦρο πῶς, τίνι στόλῳ;
ΥΨ. ναῦται κώπαις
Ναύπλιον εἰς λιμένα
ξενικὸν πόρον ἄγαγόν με
δουλοσύ[ν]ας τ' ἐπέβασαν, ὦ τέκνον,
ἐνθάδε νάϊον μέλεον ἐμπολάν.
ΕΥ. οἴμοι κακῶν σῶν.
ΥΨ. μὴ στέν' ἐπ' εὐτυχίαισιν.

HYPSIPYLE: (singing) *Aiai! for the adventures of my flight—*
oh child, if you knew!—from the island of Lemnos,
because I did not cut my father's gray head.
EUNEUS: You mean they ordered you to murder your father?
HYPSIPYLE: *Fear held me back from the crime then. Iô!*
Child, like Gorgons they killed
their husbands in their beds!
EUNEUS: But how did you steal away, so as not to kill?
HYPSIPYLE: *I came to the deep-sounding shores*
and to the sea water,
the birds' desolate lair.
EUNEUS: And then how did you come here, by what voyage?
HYPSIPYLE: *Sailors with oars*
into the Nauplian harbor,
on a foreign journey they led me
and set me up into slavery, oh child,
here as wretched ship's merchandise.
EUNEUS: *Oimoi!* for your troubles!
HYPSIPYLE: *Do not groan for good fortunes.*

Hypsipyle 759a.72–89[35]

It is not clear whether this particular narrative—the massacre committed by the Lemnian women, Hypsipyle's abduction by pirates on the beach—was ever broached earlier in the play, perhaps in the lost prologue or in the missing portions of the *parodos*. What is clear from what remains of the *parodos* is that the chorus of women were familiar with Hypsipyle's reminiscences of Jason and the Argo, and they knew that she originally came from Lemnos. It is possible that Hypsipyle's song in the recognition duet relates new information to everyone. If we knew more about the role of Hypsipyle's sons in saving her life, we might better understand why (beyond natural curiosity) her sons would want or need to be convinced of information about her former life in Lem-

[35] Passage and line numbers are based on Cropp 2004.

nos. Even so, her admission that she was the only Lemnian woman who did not kill a man, and that by sparing her father she put herself in a location where she was easily abducted, does help explain to the sons how she could possibly be here in Nemea, on the opposite side of the Aegean Sea from Lemnos. At the end of Hypsipyle's narrative, Euneus is so moved that he appears about to break into song with the lyric utterance *oimoi kakôn sôn* ("Alas for your troubles!"). Hypsipyle, however, stops him from joining in her song, and instead switches the conversation into an interrogation (to be discussed in Chapter 3). This does not mean that she is 'out of control' when she sings, for Euneus does not make any gesture to calm her down; if anything, his *oimoi kakôn sôn* shows that he, too, is emotionally engaged in the exchange. If more of the play survived, we might have a better idea of how it all fitted together. Perhaps in the lost later half of the duet, Hypsipyle had to prove something about her former sufferings or convince her sons of some truth; it probably did not have anything to do with the sons' paternity (in contrast to Ion), since Euneus speaks of Jason as his father. Perhaps the lost parts of the duet had to do with Hypsipyle's father Thoas, who, we learn at the end of the surviving material, was aided in some way by Dionysus in leading Hypsipyle's sons to Nemea. As it stands, Hypsipyle in her recognition duet accomplishes the same things as Iphigenia, Helen, and Creusa: she confronts her past memories of physical suffering (in this case, abduction) and relates them in a truth-telling fashion to a male listener, and this is a prelude to her relocation to domestic (and free) status with her family.

Sophocles' Electra

The only other surviving recognition scene in Greek tragedy written as an *epirrhematic amoibaion* is from Sophocles' *Electra*. A brief examination of this scene demonstrates how the Sophoclean handling of the recognition situation differs greatly from the Euripidean method. The Electra myth is about bitterness and revenge. Electra's mother, Clytemnestra, murdered her husband Agamemnon (Electra's father) with the help of Agamemnon's cousin Aegisthus, whom she subsequently married. Ever since, Electra has mourned her father's death, harbored fierce resentment against her mother, and awaited the day when her brother Orestes will come home and kill their father's murderers. In the Sophoclean version of this story, Orestes fakes his own death in order to gain

access to the palace; but when he sees his own sister mourn excessively over the urn that is supposed to contain his ashes, he reveals his true identity. Electra explodes into song.

At Sophocles' *Electra* 1232–1287, Electra sings 41 full lines of lyric and two half-lines of lyric against Orestes' eleven lines of iambic trimeter (twelve if we posit a lacuna between 1264 & 1265). Orestes recites (or perhaps sings) only two half-lines (1276 and 1280) which are not part of an iambic trimeter. Electra herself also has two lines of iambic trimeter (1235, 1256), which (as far as anyone knows) might have been sung rather than spoken. Unlike Euripides, Sophocles does use female lyric to highlight female emotion, and male iambics as a kind of rational foil; in the context of his play, this has great effect. The point of the duet is not just that Electra is emotional, but that she is out of control and in danger of spoiling their plans. Given that she has just spent the previous scenes assuming that her brother was dead (including a fake messenger speech narrating Orestes' gory death in a chariot accident), the truth that Orestes is alive is understandably overwhelming. The duet nicely highlights the years of waiting and frustration that have led up to this moment of reunion. Yet from the very opening, Electra's excitement worries her brother:

ΗΛ. ἰὼ γοναί,
γοναὶ σωμάτων ἐμοὶ φιλτάτων,
ἐμόλετ' ἀρτίως,
ἐφηύρετ', ἤλθετ', εἴδεθ' οὓς ἐχρῄζετε.
ΟΡ. πάρεσμεν· ἀλλὰ σῖγ' ἔχουσα πρόσμενε.
ΗΛ. τί δ' ἔστιν;
ΟΡ. σιγᾶν ἄμεινον, μή τις ἔνδοθεν κλύῃ.
ΗΛ. μὰ τὰν Ἄρτεμιν τὰν αἰὲν ἀδμήταν,
τόδε μὲν οὔποτ' ἀξιώσω τρέσαι,
περισσὸν ἄχθος ἔνδον
γυναικῶν ὃ ναίει.
ΟΡ. ὅρα γε μὲν δὴ κἀν γυναιξὶν ὡς Ἄρης
ἔνεστιν· εὖ δ' ἔξοισθα πειραθεῖσά που.

ELECTRA: (singing) *Iô, child,*
child of the body most beloved by me,
at last you have come,
have found, have come, have seen those you yearned for.
ORESTES: We've come; but bide your time in silence.
ELECTRA: *Why?*
ORESTES: To be silent is better, so that none inside may hear.
ELECTRA: *No, by Artemis, ever virgin,*
That I will never stoop to fear—
the vain burden that lives inside there
is women's.

ORESTES: Yes, but consider that even in women, Ares
may live. You know it well from experience. Soph. *Electra* 1232–1244

Now that Orestes is home, all of Electra's hopes for enacting revenge on her mother surface. She says that with Orestes back, she would never deem it worthy to fear the vain womanly burden that lives in the house (1242); this is either a slur on the masculinity of Aegisthus, or an insulting reference to Clytemnestra, or both. Orestes must remind her that women like Clytemnestra have a warlike spirit, which immediately reminds Electra of the death of her father, a memory she can never overcome (1246–1250). In this concise exchange, the extent of Electra's tragedy is apparent: she has been excluded from the very plan—the murder of her mother and Aegisthus—that she has been awaiting all these years. As she indicated in her scene with her sister Chrysothemis (947ff.), Electra was ready to commit the murder herself, even without help. When Orestes reveals himself as alive, it is precisely Electra's excess of emotion at that revelation which threatens to expose their plans for the murder. Electra's song describes her joy at Orestes' return and the necessity of speech to express that joy (1260–1261); she says that in the past she has "held her rage speechless" (1283–1284)—which is not entirely true. Her logic is that with the return of Orestes, she has no need to be silent about her rage, for her brother will put everything right. Her song amounts to shouting, for Orestes' spoken trimeters counter with the necessity for silence (1236, 1238, 1244, etc.), lest anyone overhear them and expose the truth—that Orestes has come home to kill his mother. In fact, at the end of the duet, Orestes' Tutor (and fellow conspirator) rushes out of the house and warns them to be quiet; Orestes' concern that Electra's outbursts could cause trouble is immediately justified. It is precisely Electra's emotion expressed in lyric (the same emotion which she has expressed throughout the play in anticipation of the opportunity for the murder) that threatens to ruin the very murder plot. The use of meter to contrast character is more appropriate for the siblings, as well as more revealing. In Hannah Roisman's words,

> His (Orestes') refusal to partake or even respond to his sister's lyrical passion in the pivotal, emotionally charged reunion and recognition scene emphasizes his cold, obdurate intent to regain the throne, whatever the bloodshed involved. The clear contrast between Electra's lyrical meters and Orestes' iambs conveys the moral and emotional gulf between her total impracticality and his calculated cold-bloodedness.[36]

[36] Roisman (2000), 199.

Roisman also points out that Electra's subsequent enthusiastic fawning over the Tutor, including caressing his hands and feet (1354–1363), is expressed in iambic trimeters, not song.

Euripides' recognition scenes differ in one striking way. Unlike Sophocles, within the Euripidean lyric moment there is never the fear of exposure or the concern that a rescue plot might be overheard or ruined by the woman's lack of control. Even in *Helen* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, where the eventual escape of the heroine and her male kin forms the basis of the plot, Euripides never suggests that women's song in his recognition duets poses a danger.

Conclusions

The analysis of these plays has led to some basic premises concerning the nature, use, and purpose of women's lyric in Euripides' recognition duets. First, lyric communicates private knowledge. Hearing women sing highlights the essential difference between the experience of female and male characters in Euripidean recognition situations. These duets happen after the recognition proper, that is, after the presentation of tokens or some other means whereby husband and wife, or sister and brother, or mother and son(s), recognize each other. At that point, there are things that the woman needs to tell the man, and this is done through the recollection of experiences. Song is the means for women to reveal their private knowledge based on that experience—knowledge that is intimately connected with the woman's body and the physical treatment it endured in the past. Song becomes, as it were, the voice of Iphigenia's body nearly sacrificed; Helen abducted; Creusa raped; Hypsipyle captured. This is expressed as a kind of lament for past woes, or in some cases a defense of her virtue.

Second, lyric has a truth-telling power. The female singer in Euripides' recognition duets must prove a truth about her past to her male kin before the drama can go forward or be resolved. Because the men in these recognition scenes—Orestes, Menelaus, Ion, and Euneus—are hearing women's memories they know nothing about, the lyric moment becomes a performance, not only a musical one for the theater audience, but a dramatic one for the male character on stage. The men's participation in this performance is vital, for it is the men's presence that signals the possibility of the women's rescue. Orestes will return Iphigenia to Greece, Menelaus will take Helen back to Sparta as his

wife, Creusa will return to Athens with her son, and Hypsipyle will be released from slavery and live with her sons.[37] These rescues do not happen automatically, but are dependent on the woman's ability to explain persuasively certain issues that only she can present and, as a result, drive on towards the resolution.

Third, lyric denotes a power differential that requires women to be persuasive. Actors do not sing when they can give orders instead. The singer finds herself in a less powerful position than her male interlocutor. This does not mean that the woman is more vulnerable in the immediate dramatic setting; Helen and Iphigenia in exile have distinct advantages over their interlocutors, and Creusa and Hypsipyle (who sing at the end of their plays) have finished their hardships and are ready to embark on happier times. Rather, the woman's less powerful position takes the form of a necessity and obligation for her to explain herself and make herself believable. Intensity of emotion (on both male and female sides) results from this power differential, since emotion is a common and useful companion of persuasion. If we compare the prototype of recognitions—Odysseus and Penelope in *Odyssey* 23.163–230—it is worth remembering that what convinces Penelope of Odysseus' identity is not only his knowledge about the immovability of his bed, but that he is angry (*ochthêsas*, 23.182) and emotional at the thought that someone could have moved it. This model is not an exact comparison, for what Homer dramatizes is the actual moment of recognition, whereas Euripides' duets take place after the recognition proper; but clearly within the literary tradition, intense emotion is helpful when one wants to be convincing.[38]

If these suggestions are accurate, they may help explain why, for a story like the Electra myth which clearly involves a sister recognizing a brother, Euripides did not compose an *epirrhematic amoibaion* for his *Electra*, even though Sophocles wrote one for his own. Though it may

[37] Cyrino (1998), 92 reads these lyric recognition scenes as a "combination of the song's description of past suffering and the ultimate relocation of the female lyric singer in a position subordinate to the male trimeter speaker." Yet in two cases, these "relocations" are slightly skewed. In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Athena *ex machina* informs us that Iphigenia will not return to her home in Argos (or what's left of it), but will actually settle in Brauron as Artemis' priestess and die there (*Iphigenia in Tauris* 1462–1464). In *Ion*, Athena *ex machina* tells Creusa not to reveal that she is Ion's mother, so that Xuthus may retain his delusion of being Ion's father. Although Creusa will always know the truth that she has been reunited with her only son, no one else will know it; furthermore, she will bear other children—two sons—by Xuthus (*Ion* 1589–1594).

[38] I thank Ruth Scodel for first suggesting this Odyssean parallel.

be impossible to assess completely accurately why any author chooses not to follow a particular convention, it is nonetheless tempting to theorize that Euripides believed the dramatic context of his *Electra* simply did not call for a duet because Electra had no individual knowledge which she needed to share with her brother. What is more important to Euripides' version of the story is Electra's own subjective perceptions of her position and the injustices done to her, not factual understandings of past events. Both to the chorus (in song, 175ff.) and to Orestes (in trimeters, 300ff., when she presumes he is merely a stranger) Electra explains, in glorious detail, what she believes her sufferings are: being forced to dress in rags, her nobility insulted by her marriage to a farmer. These point to resentment rather than truth. When Orestes' true identity is revealed by a scar (573) recognized by the Old Man (a faithful servant, and the very man who spirited the young Orestes out of Argos), there is no dramatic purpose in making Electra the aural focus of the scene, since Orestes does not need to be informed of her sufferings before he can undertake the murder of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. He is already motivated enough, and in fact turns to the Old Man, rather than to Electra, for advice on the state of affairs in Argos and how to proceed with the murder of Aegisthus (598).

Nevertheless, Euripides does not eschew the idea of a lyric duet between brother and sister, and saves it for the end of the play (Eur. *Electra* 1177–1237)—yet this time, Orestes joins Electra and the female chorus in singing.

ΟΡ. ἰὼ Γᾶ καὶ Ζεῦ πανδερκέτα
βροτῶν, ἴδετε τάδ' ἔργα φόνι-
α μυσαρά, δίγονα σώματ' ἐν
†χθονὶ κείμενα πλαγᾷ†
χερὸς ὑπ' ἐμᾶς, ἄποιν' ἐμῶν
πημάτων ⟨
⟩
ΗΛ. δακρύτ' ἄγαν, ὦ σύγγον', αἰτία δ' ἐγώ.
διὰ πυρὸς ἔμολον ἁ τάλαινα ματρὶ τᾷδ',
ἅ μ' ἔτικτε κούραν.
⟨ΧΟ⟩. ἰὼ τύχας †σᾶς τύχας
μᾶτερ τεκοῦσ'†
ἄλαστα μέλεα καὶ πέρα
παθοῦσα σῶν τέκνων ὑπαί.
πατρὸς δ' ἔτεισας φόνον δικαίως.
ΟΡ. ἰὼ Φοῖβ', ἀνύμνησας δίκαι'
ἄφαντα, φανερὰ δ' ἐξέπρα-
ξας ἄχεα, φόνια δ' ὤπασας

λάχε’ ἀπὸ γᾶς Ἑλλανίδος.
τίνα δ’ ἑτέραν μόλω πόλιν;
τίς ξένος, τίς εὐσεβὴς
ἐμὸν κάρα προσόψεται
ματέρα κτανόντος;
ΗΛ. ἰὼ ἰώ μοι. ποῖ δ’ ἐγώ, τίν’ ἐς χορόν,
τίνα γάμον εἶμι; τίς πόσις με δέξεται
νυμφικὰς ἐς εὐνάς;

ORESTES: (singing) *Iô! Earth, and Zeus who sees all things*
of mortals, look at these deeds, bloody,
loathsome, two bodies
lying on the earth at the blow
from my hand, requital for my
sufferings ⟨
⟩
ELECTRA: (singing) *Tears to excess, oh my brother, and I am responsible.*
In fiery rage I—miserable!—I came against this woman, the mother
who bore me, a young girl.
CHORUS: (singing) *Iô! for your fate, †your fate,*
mother giving birth to†
insufferable pains, and things beyond miserable
suffering at the hands of your children.
Yet you have justly paid for their father's murder.
ORESTES: *Iô! Phoebus! you proclaimed justice*
unclear, but clear pains you have brought
to pass, and given me a bloody
destiny away from the land of Hellas.
To what other city can I go?
What guest-friend, what pious man
will look at my person,
me, who killed my mother?
ELECTRA: *Iô iô moi! And I, where, to what dance,*
to what marriage will I go? What husband will receive me
into the bridal bed? Eur. *Electra* 1177–1200

In this representative portion of their song, the siblings are horrified at their matricide and sing in lyric iambics in exchange with the chorus. Orestes' thoughts linger at first on his shock at the murder itself, then on his uncertain future in exile. Electra owns up to her own role in instigating her mother's murder, but is also fixated on her future—whether she will ever dance again, or if she will ever marry (she forgets for the moment, of course, that she is already married). The choice of meter might be significant; whereas Eurpidean women in recognition duets sing mainly in dochmiacs, Orestes and Electra sing in lyric iambics, which is as close to spoken iambic trimeters that

a singer can get. Perhaps this meter is appropriate for this musical moment which doubles as a kind of messenger speech, since their song goes on to narrate, in pathetic detail, how Clytemnestra bared her breasts, grabbed Orestes' chin and begged for life (1206ff.), but brother and sister together plunged the sword into their mother's neck (1221–1225). These are things that happened moments earlier offstage, and an audience needs to hear about them; but the messengers of the events are the murderers themselves, and they feel sorry about it.

Why does the male sing with the woman, and not speak in trimeters against the woman's lyrics at this point? It is because Orestes and Electra together have shared the same trauma. Neither sibling has the job of explaining to the other any special insight into events, or of performing for an avid listener. There is no power differential; they have both just murdered their mother, and they share equally the sudden powerlessness that comes from murdering a parent and living with the guilt. In Judith Mossman's words, "Orestes is no longer being dictated to by Electra's emotions, but is expressing his own. Electra's acceptance of responsibility for having egged her brother on is, as the audience knows, no more than the truth."[39]

Because the features of women's song in Euripides' recognition duets are so consistent between four separate plays, such song should be read as a verbal genre of tragic (perhaps even 'Euripidean') women's language. If so, some exciting qualities stand out. Laura McClure argues that, in plays like *Agamemnon, Hippolytus* or *Andromache*, tragic women's language (particularly in the verbal genres of gossip and seductive persuasion) is disruptive of patriarchal society, yet is ultimately contained and altered into a ritual form.[40] Iphigenia, Helen, Creusa and Hypsipyle, however, are examples of tragic women who can engage positively with a verbal genre (persuasive song), the final goal of which is the reintegration of men into society by reunion with long-lost family, and the eventual transfer of women into that society at the men's side, with the women's aid and consent. Even such private and potentially disruptive topics as rape, abduction, and attempted murder are raised by women openly and honestly, for the benefit—not the detriment—of select men. Yet, at the same time, these women are elsewhere skilled in manipulating their language to deceive their enemies, real and appar-

[39] Mossman (2001), 383.
[40] McClure (1999).

ent (Thoas, Theoclymenus, and Ion before Creusa knows his identity). This may hint at the potential of these women (and by extension, of all women) to disrupt the society with which they will eventually be reunited. For example, given Helen's dexterity at deceiving Theoclymenus (including a promise to marry him), an astute audience might wonder what would prevent her from similarly deceiving Menelaus in the future back in Greece. Also, Creusa proves herself perfectly capable of plotting a murder in response to what she believed was her husband's good fortune. Yet the women of these plays put their language to good use for their male kin once they recognize them, and it is arguably this support of patriarchal interests which renders acceptable these women's otherwise dangerous language. Therefore, one further manifestation of Greek tragedy's differentiation between masculine and feminine modes of speaking and handling language—a way in which tragic women become more than just 'men in drag'—is Euripides' depiction of women's abilities to shift between and within verbal genres (of which truth-telling persuasive song is one) to suit their purposes. 'Between' genres means that a woman like Iphigenia can sing truth-telling persuasive song to her brother one minute, then spin a web of deceit to Thoas the next. 'Within genres' means that a woman like Creusa can vary the spirit of the memory of her rape to two different stage audiences (*Ion* 859–922 and 1439–1511), yet still relate the information in truth-telling persuasive song on both occasions.[41]

Lastly, why is it the female characters who sing in Euripides' recognition duets, and not the male, even in a play like *Ion* where the protagonist is male and sings elsewhere? This is because Euripides has constructed plots in which the female has a private body of knowledge which her male kin needs to learn. Male trimeter need not be read as indicative of men's firmness or calm self-control, since the Euripidean men do, in fact, respond emotionally, thus offering proof that the woman's persuasion is working. Rather, the men's use of trimeter indicates their need to say less and listen more attentively to what the female singer has to say. But there is a further level to this. Froma Zeitlin and others have suggested that tragedy's mimesis of and participation with the 'other' invites a male spectator to understand a female experience—perhaps even 'undergo' that experience through the act of

[41] This slipperiness in regard to verbal genre is not limited to Euripides; compare, for instance, McClure's discussion of what she calls 'Clytemnestra's shifting verbal genres' in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (McClure 1999: 73–80).

viewing the drama—in order to re-evaluate his own maleness.[42] This only works if a female experience is believable and concretized, for example, by the truthful and persuasive power of song. It is important that tragic women be believed, not only by their internal audiences of choruses and male family, but also by the external audience that listens and watches in the theater. Iphigenia, Helen, Creusa, and Hypsipyle could have communicated by trimeter speech for the entire text and still have made a play; but for as long as she sings, a tragic woman's lyrics force an audience to take her point of view seriously.

[42] See Zeitlin (1996).

CHAPTER THREE

WHY AM I SINGING? RESISTANCE AND OTHER SEMANTICS OF LYRIC

The previous chapter suggested that Euripidean women's song in recognition duets can be read as a specialized type of tragic communication. This chapter proposes to explore other Euripidean contexts in which women's song is equally specialized. The Euripidean personae whose inner selves and connections to the intangible are uncovered by song are usually women, but this chapter will also end with an overview of Euripidean men's song.

Tragic characters sing in a variety of conventional forms: monodies (solo 'arias'), lyric duets (in which two parties sing, often as a *kommos* or dirge), *epirrhematic amoibaia* and *parodoi*. *Epirrhematic amoibaia*, once again, are duets in which one character's (or the chorus') lyric song is contrasted with another character's (or the chorus') spoken trimeters. *Parodoi* are choral entrances; many times a heroine sings with a chorus, usually in metrical response to herself. In order to appreciate fully the variety of lyric moments that Euripidean characters engage in, this chapter will focus on several examples of *epirrhematic amoibaia* and *parodoi*.[1] Here is a quick summary of what survives of these patterns in the Euripidean corpus:

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[1] Monodies and lyric duets will not be discussed in detail in the interest of space, and because they are already prominently discussed in scholarship. See e.g., Schadewaldt (1926); or Mossman (1995), 51–54 on the anapestic monodies and lyric duet of *Hecuba*.

Table 1. Epirrhematic Amoibaia in Euripides

Type	*Number of examples*	*Text(s)*
Actor & Actor		
Female Actor Lyric & Male Actor Trimeter	7	*Iphigenia in Tauris* 827–899 *Helen* 625–699 *Ion* 1439–1511 *Hypsipyle* fr. 759a72–111 *Alcestis* 244–279 *Trojan Women* 239–292 *Phoenician Women* 103–201
Female Actor Lyric & Male Actor + Choral Trim.	1	*Ion* 763–803
Female Actor Lyric & Female Actor Trimeter	1	*Andromache* 825–865
Female Actor Lyric & Female Actor + Choral Trim.	1	*Hecuba* 683–723
Male Actor Lyric & Male Actor Trimeter	1	*Heracles* 1178–1202
Chorus & Actor		
Female Choral Lyric & Female Actor Trimeter	1	*Hippolytus* 565–597
Male Choral Lyric & Male Actor Trimeter	1	*Children of Heracles* 73–110

There is one item not mentioned on Table 1. The pattern of male actor lyric against female choral trimeter occurs during Theseus' monody in *Hippolytus*, but it cannot be classified as an *amoibaion* because the chorus only responds once.

In these tables, 'female actor' is a convenient shorthand for 'actor's role which is female.' All the players in ancient theater were men.

Table 2. Metrical Structures of *Parodoi* in Euripides (includes fragments)

Type	*Text(s)*
Choral Ode (Male chorus)	*Alcestis* *Heracles*
Choral Ode (Female chorus)	*Hippolytus* *Andromache* *Hecuba* *Suppliant Women* *Ion* *Phoenician Women* *Bacchae* *Iphigenia in Aulis* *Phaethon*
Lyric Dialogue [Female chorus(es) and female actor(s)]	*Medea* *Electra* *Trojan Women* *Iphigenia in Tauris* *Helen* *Orestes* *Hypsipyle*
Epirrhematic amoibaion (Male chorus and male actors)	*Children of Heracles*

The *parodos* of *Hecuba* is quite unique; the chorus does not sing a *lyric* ode, but a song of marching anapests. The chorus enters after Hecuba's lyric anapests, and their song is followed by a lyric duet between Polyxena and Hecuba. The chorus does not participate in the exchange.

In six plays (*Medea, Hecuba, Electra, Trojan Women, Helen, Hypsipyle*), the female chorus enters only after the heroine has herself begun to sing. In *Medea*, the heroine is singing off-stage in melic anapests, and the chorus says it has heard her cry. In the *parodos* itself, the exchange includes Medea (still off-stage) and the Nurse, who has melic anapests (or at least in the Doric dialect) at 139–143.

In *Trojan Women*, the lyric exchange is split between two half-choruses and Hecuba.

See also Schmidt (1971) for a fuller analysis.

The previous chapter suggested that women's song in recognition duets was connected to and expressive of women's memory and private knowledge. This chapter will propose three more semantic categories for Euripidean women's song, as illustrated by many *epirrhematic amoibaia* and *parodoi*: resistance, transition, and interrogation. Euripidean women sing when they resist other people's advice or understanding of the world; they sing to indicate a sudden shift in a play's plot that causes a significant change in their characterization; and they sing when asking men pointed questions in contexts where the women's reaction to the answers is more telling than the answers themselves.

Female Lyric as Resistance[2]

All Greek tragedies explore the human response to misfortune. The people of myth whom Euripides selects as the focus of his plays repeatedly face the death of loved ones and suffer abandonment, exile, and betrayal. The Euripidean heroine initially responds to these situations by claiming an ownership of grief, stating that the death of her father or the abandonment by her lover or her exile in a foreign land or her imminent death are all that she can think about. She also demands that others recognize her sufferings as real and legitimate. This ownership of suffering is expressed by a refusal to accept the sympathy or take the advice of others (often a chorus that responds to grief with platitudes) and is sung in lyrics. There is a paradox in this: the fictional woman is in a state of utter powerlessness, which is expressed not by silence, but by communication, since she nonetheless has the power to sing. The lyrical voicing of her powerlessness gives her a strange kind of control, in that Euripides' heroines act with authority when they resist the predominant expectations of how they should behave—whether that means giving in to someone else's understanding of an event, or giving up lamentations and moving forward with their lives.

As argued earlier in Chapter 2, Euripides repeatedly represents women's life experiences as essentially unlike those of men, and even grounded in violence or submission. Stanley Hoffer's comments on Creusa's speech at *Ion* 252 are instructive:

[2] An earlier version of this section appeared as "Song and the Solitary Self: Euripidean women who resist comfort," *Phoenix: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada* 57 (2003–2004): 209–231. Reprinted with permission.

> In Creusa's riddle, women's "suffering" (252 τλήμονες) and gods' "daring" (τολμήματα) are the same events seen from opposite sides, as the play on words suggests.… Creusa's outburst displays the tension of suppression and resistance, of "enduring" and "daring," on both social and psychological levels.[3]

Tragic women's songs which are expressive of this power differential might be said to have resistance built into them, inasmuch as the singing subject can define herself against her overwhelming troubles (of which only she has explicit knowledge), and can in desperation argue with a person who tries to comfort or distract her. As William Allan writes of tragic women:

> Their marginal status, often compounded by foreignness and slavery, enhances the impact of their moral and intellectual challenge to "the dominant orderings of patriarchal society" [quoting Goldhill]. If there is one feature which Euripides' work may be said to communicate most penetratingly in this area, it is to stress the distinctive tragic potential of women's constrained experience. However, our appreciation of such distinctiveness needs to be carried through to the level of individual characters. In the *Troades*, for example, Cassandra, Hecuba, and Andromache all face the same bleak backdrop of Troy in ruins, but each of them interprets her situation and reacts to it in a unique way.[4]

Allan thus advises a useful caveat against generalization: not all Euripidean women sing for the same reasons. To use Creusa as a test model again: she sings of her rape twice, but her motivation for sharing her experience differs in each lyric scene. In the one instance (the monody at *Ion* 859–922), her motivation is anger at the god; in the other (her duet with her son, 1437–1509), it is desire to prove to her long-lost son his divine paternity. Creusa sings the same information twice, but in completely different modes to different audiences and for opposite ends.

Four of Euripides' female characters, while singing lyrics in an exchange (*amoibaion*) with an interlocutor, express resistance to being comforted: Electra from her name play, Hypsipyle, Alcestis, and Hermione in *Andromache*. Refusal to be comforted is not the only reaction that a tragic woman can have to potential comforters, but it is one which Euripides chose to convey in song. A character in Greek tragedy does

[3] Hoffer (1996), 306.
[4] Allan (2000), 194–195.

not sing when she can give orders instead (for which iambic trimeters would be more appropriate), and Electra, Hypsipyle, Alcestis, and Hermione each finds herself in a situation where she is least able to give orders: slavery, exile, and near-death experiences. All four are nobly born women; in fact, for three of them—Electra, Hypsipyle, and Hermione—the loss or maintenance of this noble status is very much the issue in their songs. Yet despite the help that her interlocutors might bring, each woman refuses to connect with them, thus remaining isolated in her own private world. In the previous chapter, it was argued that the persuasive and truth-telling songs of Euripidean women in recognition duets form an independent verbal genre characteristic of female communication in tragedy. Likewise, Euripidean women's songs of resistance should be read as an independent tragic verbal genre, or at the very least, a sub-genre of women's song.

a. *Electra in Eur.* Electra

In the *parodos* of *Electra*, Electra is in a situation far removed from former, happier days. She stands in front of the hut where she, once a princess of Argos, now lives with her poor farmer husband, and she laments the day when her father Agamemnon was murdered by her adulterous mother. The visiting country girls who form the chorus interrupt Electra in the fifty-fifth line of her long lament and invite her to attend a festival of Hera (Eur. *Electra* 167–174). Electra refuses to go, insisting that her sorrow prevents her from participating in the festal choruses, and that her face, shorn head, and the rags she now wears are unfit for the princess she is (175–189). The girls offer her a dress to wear (190–192) and give her specific advice about her lamentations:

> δοκεῖς τοῖσι σοῖς δακρύοις
> μὴ τιμῶσα θεοὺς κρατή-
> σεις ἐχθρῶν; οὔτοι στοναχαῖς
> ἀλλ' εὐχαῖσι θεοὺς σεβί-
> ζουσ' ἕξεις εὐαμερίαν, ὦ παῖ.

> CHORUS: Do you think that with your tears,
> instead of honoring the gods, you can defeat
> your enemies? By worshipping the gods
> not with wails, but with prayers
> shall you have a brighter day, child. Eur. *Electra* 193–197

Even with such sympathy, Electra refuses to be distracted from her song of complaint. One might have expected her to respond that her tears *do*

honor the gods, but instead she insists the gods do not listen to her voice (198) despite her constant wailing for her father and for the wandering Orestes (198–206). She doubly refuses the women's advice; not only does she not borrow a dress, but she denies the efficacy of attending the festival at all. The chorus women suggest that prayers to the gods (e.g. Hera) could bring Electra brighter days; but Electra implies that the gods have already forsaken her, so what's the point of joining the festival? Electra uses song to persuade the chorus of her view of the world and her understanding of herself: that she is past change, past reliance on the gods.

Why is the Euripidean Electra so reluctant to be comforted? Or rather, what does her act of resistance indicate about her past, her present troubles, and expectations for the future? To formulate an answer to these questions, it is worth comparing this Electra to the title role of Sophocles' *Electra*, who also rejects—in song—the advice and comfort of a chorus of women. Bernard Knox argued that rejection of advice was a pattern common to Sophoclean drama and its construction of the tragic hero:

> What the [Sophoclean] hero is really asked to do, the demand behind the appeal to reason and emotion, the advice to reflect and be persuaded is—to yield, εἴκειν.... The hero will not listen, but he hears enough to know that he is under attack. And his reaction is violent and swift. The role of those who try to advise him is not easy.[5]

Like the heroine of Euripides' play, the Sophoclean Electra is advised by her chorus to moderate her lamentations for Agamemnon. She, too, argues that she is past change, exemplified by her invocation of the nightingale who cries Itys, and Niobe the rock face (Soph. *Electra* 147–152), two women who through metamorphosis (oddly enough, an act of change) have become unchanging and eternal symbols of mourning. In Knox's words, "time and its imperative of change are in fact precisely what the Sophoclean hero defies."[6] But what distinguishes the Sophoclean Electra from Euripides' heroine in these respects is that the Sophoclean Electra's inability to change exhibits a certain nobility. She is a victim of terrible circumstances not of her own making, and her life-long lamentations are her painful way of remaining true to her father's memory rather than yielding to those in power, as her sister Chrysothemis does. When the chorus women rebuke Electra for show-

[5] Knox (1964), 15, 19.
[6] Knox (1964), 27.

ing no moderation in her mourning for her father, she asks rhetorically what measure (*metron*) exists for her misery (Soph. *Electra* 236), or as Anne Carson has rendered it, "And at what point does the evil level off in my life, tell me that!" Carson also brilliantly reminds us that "nobody answers her."[7]

The Euripidean Electra, on the other hand, resists comfort in a manner so indignant that it alienates both her chorus of women and the audience; it is very difficult for anyone to feel sorry for her. Her miseries are self-imposed, part of her own strange and skewed vision of the world, requiring an audience to consider carefully everything which occurs in the play with (in Arnott's terms) "double the vision."[8] On the surface, Electra's devotion to absent family in the form of a lament seems a noble thing; her earlier comparison of herself to a stranded swan rasping its calls to its beloved father that has been caught in a net (Eur. *Electra* 151–155) is certainly intended for such an effect. But Electra's song is just as informative of her own obsessions as it is poetic. She is connected to something absent or unseen, which includes not only her memories of Agamemnon, but also what she presumes the chorus is unwilling to see and acknowledge, so that her song highlights her self-serving perception of her own misfortune.

Before the chorus arrived, Electra sang for the audience her view of her present situation. She waits for her wandering brother Orestes to come and rescue her from her misfortunes which include being called "poor Electra" (*athlian Elektran*, 118–119) by the citizens, and spending day after day weeping, tearing her cheeks with her fingernails, and holding her shorn head in grief (145–159). Yet when the chorus women arrive, they address her as "daughter of Agamemnon" (167) and make no mention of pitying her. Later, the chorus women say they have never even heard the full details of Electra's story, since they live far away from the city (298–299). Furthermore, they do not think Electra's appearance in any way prevents her from participating in Hera's festival, and when she insists that she *is* prevented by her appearance, they even offer to help remedy the situation with a dress. By repeatedly refusing help, Electra crescendos towards what is truly troubling her. Her final lyric response to the chorus—her finale—culminates in what she considers the worst aspect of her misfortune: not that she cannot avenge her father because Orestes has not returned, but:

[7] Carson (2001), 48.
[8] Arnott (1981).

αὐτὰ δ' ἐν χερνῆσι δόμοις
ναίω ψυχὰν τακομένα
δωμάτων φυγὰς πατρίων
οὐρείας ἀν' ἐρίπνας.
μάτηρ δ' ἐν λέκτροις φονίοις
ἄλλῳ σύγγαμος οἰκεῖ.

ELECTRA: (singing) *And I live in a poor man's house,*
my spirit wearing thin,
exiled from parental home
to mountain crags,
while my mother in her murder-bloodied bed
lives married to a new man. Eur. *Electra* 207–212

It is her mother's marriage to Aegisthus and Electra's own lack of sexual fulfillment in her non-marriage to the farmer—her loss of noble status—that is the source of her misfortune and need for lamentation. It is this twisted self-perception that renders her unwilling to follow the chorus' advice to participate in public festivals. As Ruth Scodel puts it, "Electra's refusal seems to be merely an expression of her resentful nostalgia."[9]

Because of its emotional associations, song is a practical medium for conveying an act of resistance that has as its source protracted feelings of resentment and disenchantment, erupting before a group of women who claim to know nothing about them. Yet song is also practical here because of its conventional structures of delivery. Anne Carson has noted that the *parodos* of Sophocles' *Electra* is arranged in a dramatic way metrically, in that the two interlocutors (Electra and chorus) respond antiphonally only to their own words, and not to each other's. As Carson puts it,

> If Electra and the chorus had sung strophe and antistrophe respectively, the effect would have been one of shared thought or interwoven emotion. But Sophocles has chosen to further subdivide each strophe and antistrophe, so that each six lines of Electra respond with another six lines of Electra, and each six lines of the chorus respond with another six lines of the chorus. They are each talking to themselves. Musically, it is an anti-dialogue.[10]

Euripides' *Electra* follows the same principle, although the "anti-dialogue" is much shorter, consisting of only one round of strophe and

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[9] Scodel (1997), 92.
[10] Carson (2001), 48.

antistrophe for Electra against chorus—Sophocles' *parodos* has three responsive pairs, plus an epode—and in both plays, Electra has the last lyric word of the exchange. But Euripides adds another element that Sophocles' structure lacks. In both plays, the chorus women enter to find Electra singing; but it is Euripides who gives Electra a structured monody consisting of two strophic pairs separated by mesodes, and this for a woman who has already been on stage once in the prologue. Euripides' Electra not only has a non-conversation with the chorus women; she has a long structured talk in responsion with herself before they even arrive. Euripides certainly was capable of writing a *parodos* in which a chorus sang the antistrophe of an actor's strophe (the surviving example of which is *Helen* 167–228).[11] If Carson is correct that singing in responsion to one's own words is a significant structure, then Euripides' Electra is even more self-absorbed than Sophocles' heroine, for in Euripides' play her participation in the *parodos* consists *entirely* of talking to and answering herself.

For all that her refusals construct the appearance of a woman who cannot change, Electra does, of course, change quite dramatically as the play proceeds, often into the opposite of the persona she had created for herself in the *parodos*. Froma Zeitlin reminds us that in the latter part of the play:

> Electra, who had earlier refused to participate in the choral dance (178–180) willingly joins in the celebration with the members of the chorus. She raises up a victory song for her brother, the triumphant hero, and would crown his head (872, 883; cf. 887).[12]

Though Electra had professed to the chorus women that it was useless to pray to the gods since they do not hear her, she nonetheless joins Orestes and the Old Man in a prayer at 671ff., when Orestes calls upon Zeus. Electra herself calls on Gaia (677), and may be the speaker who at 674 invokes Hera (the very goddess whose festival she refused to attend).[13] But at the finale of the drama, after the matricide, Electra's original persona—a woman who refused to join the Argive community—is chillingly brought back to her. In Zeitlin's words:

[11] For the varied structures of *parodoi* in extant tragedy, see Schmidt (1971), 11–18.
[12] Zeitlin (1970), 656–657.
[13] Of the two OCT editors, Murray assigned line 674 to Electra, Diggle to Orestes.

Electra can truly ask in what choral dance she can participate (1198). The dance she refused of her own free will is now closed to her; the self-imposed exile from Argos has become a reality (1311–1315).[14]

b. *Hypsipyle*

In the fragmentary *parodos* of *Hypsipyle*, the heroine refuses the advice of female friends in the same metrical structure as in *Electra*: she does not sing the antistrophe to the chorus' strophe, but rather responds to her own earlier strophe. This is in the context of a musical exchange whose very topic is the efficacy of singing. References to musical motifs, including instruments, are abundant in this *parodos*: the rattling castanets (*kortala*) which Hypsipyle shakes for Opheltes' amusement, the Thracian lyre (*kithara*) with which Orpheus used to sing Asian laments on the ship Argo, and the magical lyre utilized by Amphion to build the city of Thebes. The Muse is invoked both as the inspiration for Hypsipyle's lullaby, and as unable to soothe Hypsipyle's pains. Hypsipyle and the chorus seem to be asking why a woman might sing, and imply that the point of singing is to find just the right kind of song to relieve suffering. Hypsipyle begins with a lullaby to the infant Opheltes:

......] αὔξημα τὸ σὸν
...] νησωμαι, τέκνον, εὐ-
ωποῖς ἢ θεραπείαις.
ἰδού, κτύπος ὅδε κορτάλων

HYPSIPYLE: (singing) ... *your growing up* ...
I may woo (προμνήσωμαι) *you, child,*
with smiles or with service.
Look here, the sound of the rattle ... *Hypsipyle* 752f.5–8

But this song which clearly begins as a lullaby addressed to her infant charge expands into a complaint:

οὐ τάδε πήνας, οὐ τάδε κερκίδος
ἱστοτόνου παραμύθια Λήμνι' ἃ
Μοῦσα θέλει με κρέκειν, ὅ τι δ' εἰς ὕπνον
ἢ χάριν ἢ θεραπεύματα πρόσφορα
παιδὶ πρέπει νεαρῷ
τάδε μελῳδὸς αὐδῶ.

10 Λήμνι' ἃ Battezzato Λήμνια P
11 θέλει Morel μέλει P

[14] Zeitlin (1970), 659.

HYPSIPYLE: (singing) *These are not, these are not Lemnian consolations*
for (the labor of) the weft-thread and web-stretching shuttle
that the Muse wants me to cause to resound, but that which for sleep
or joy or suitable comfort
suits a little child—
this I sing. *Hypsipyle* 752f.9–14[15]

It is at this point that the chorus women enter, full of curiosity about Hypsipyle's activities at the doorway of the palace. They ask what she—a slave—is up to, whether sweeping the floor or washing it, neither of which Hypsipyle is actually doing. Then they inquire whether she is still singing about the past, implying that she has a reputation for song-making on a specific subject:

ἦ τὰν Ἀργὼ τὰν διὰ σοῦ
στόματος αἰεὶ κληζομέναν
πεντηκόντερον ᾄδεις,
ἢ τὸ χρυσεόμαλλον
ἱερὸν δέρος ὃ περὶ δρυὸς
ὄζοις ὄμμα δράκοντος
φρουρεῖ, μναμοσύνα δέ σοι
τᾶς ἀγχιάλοιο Λήμνου,
τὰν Αἰγαῖος ἑλίσσων
κυμοκτύπος ἀχεῖ;

CHORUS: (singing) *Or are you singing*
of the fifty-oared Argo,
forever celebrated by your mouth,
or the sacred golden-wooled fleece
which on the oak tree's boughs
the dragon's eye guards,
or are you remembering
the island of Lemnos,
around which the Aegean roars
as the circling waves thunder? *Hypsipyle* 752f.19–28

According to the chorus, Hypsipyle's habitual preoccupations are not her present misfortunes (her slavery in the palace of Nemea), but memories of a happier time gone by, including Jason, his adventures, and her life on Lemnos. But the chorus women urge her to leave off her singing and come to the Nemean meadow to watch the Argive soldiers prepare for their war against Thebes:

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[15] Luigi Battezzato (2005a), 189 makes the useful emendation from Λήμνια in line 10 to Λήμνι' ἃ, giving an object for the objective infinitive construction implied in Μοῦσα

δεῦρο †τανϯ λειμῶνα Νέμει[ον·
ἀσ[τ]ράπτει χαλκέο[ι]σιν ὅπλο[ις
Ἀργεῖον π[ε]δίον πᾶ[ν]·

CHORUS: (singing) *Here, to the Nemean meadow;*
with bronze weapons shines
the whole Argive plain. *Hypsipyle* 752f.29–31

This is surely an important event in Nemea, and worth observing; but Hypsipyle rejects their advice and prefers to remember the sad song Orpheus sang by the mast of the Argo:

… ὀρούσας
ἐπ' οἶδμα γαλανείας
πρυμνήσι ἀνάψαι,
τὸν ἅ τοῦ ποταμοῦ παρ-
θένος Αἴγιν' ἐτέκνωσεν
Πηλέα, μέσῳ δὲ παρ' ἱστῷ
Ἀσιάδ' ἔλεγον ἰήιον
Θρῇσσ' ἐβόα κίθαρις
μακροπόλων πιτύλων
ἐρέταισι κελεύσματα μελπομένα,
τότε μὲν ταχύπλουν,
τότε δ' εἰλατίνας ἀνάπαυμα πλάτα[ς.
τ[ά]δε μοι τάδε θυμὸς ἰδεῖν ἵεται,
Δαναῶν δὲ πόνους
ἕτερος ἀναβοάτω.

HYPSIPYLE: (singing) … *rushing*
over the swell of the calm sea
to fasten the cables,
him whom the river's daughter,
Aegina, bore:
Peleus; and in the middle by the mast
the Thracian lyre cried out
an Asian mournful lament,
singing the orders for the rowers
for the long sweeps of their oars, now a swift
stroke, now a rest for the pinewood blade.
These, these my spirit longs to see,
but the labors of the Danaans
let someone else cry out. *Hypsipyle* 752g.3–17

θέλει με κρέκειν. Battezzato (2005a), 184 also insists that τάδε, uttered twice in line 9, cannot mean "here" as suggested by Bond (1963) and accepted by others.

Scodel has remarked that Hypsipyle's refusal "is a priamel of the type that shades into recusatio."[16] By invoking "someone else" (*heteros*) to sing about the Argives, she makes the memory of the Argo the only subject she can sing about. Events taking place in the real world are of no interest to her; all that matter to her are the memories of her own internal world. The chorus women reply that Hypsipyle is not the only woman to suffer as she has, and they recall the stories of Europa and Io, who were also driven from their homes. Then they try to comfort her with typical platitudes, suggesting that moderation would be best and that her divine grandfather Dionysus will surely come to her aid. Hypsipyle, however, refuses to be comforted and adroitly responds with her own mythological exemplum:

κυναγόν τε Π⟨ρ⟩όκριν τὰν πόσις ἔκτα
κατεθρήνησεν ἀοιδαῖς [...
θάνατος ἔλαχε· τὰ δ' ἐμὰ πάθε[α]
τίς ἂν ἢ γόος ἢ μέλος ἢ κιθάρας
ἐπὶ δάκρυσι μοῦσ' ἀνοδυρομένα
μετὰ Καλλιόπας
ἐπὶ πόνους ἂν ἔλθοι;

HYPSIPYLE: (singing) ... *sang a lament for the huntress Procris,*
whom her husband slew...
Death was her portion. But as for my woes,
what wailing or song or lyre's
music that breaks into wailing with tears
(*even though Calliope assists*)
could approach my pains? *Hypsipyle* 752h.3–9

Despite the chorus' attempts at friendly sympathy, Hypsipyle refuses to be distracted from her own vision of the world and from her song. Lamentations might have brought comfort, she says, to those who mourned Procris, who was killed accidentally by her husband Cephalus; but for herself, one not dead but still living with her misfortunes, there is no lamentation that comes close to comforting her. This would imply that the purpose of singing itself is to discover the correct lyric genre that will provide relief from one's misfortunes. She complained earlier that she had no Lemnian song to comfort her beside her weaving; the lullaby for Opheltes brought no solace, either. When the chorus suggested that some other activity (watching the army) would be more helpful, Hypsipyle returned to the song she is known for, her fixation

[16] Scodel (1997), 93.

on a past which itself centers on a song of Orpheus which doubled as a chant for the rowers and as an Asian lament. Scodel remarks: "Although for most singers, surely, the Argo is as much a heroic topic as the expedition of Adrastus would be, for Hypsipyle it belongs to a different genre, the erotic lament, and Hypsipyle insists on selecting her own genre."[17] But even these memories are not the appropriate thing, for the lamentation which these sad memories inspire is not at all comforting. What Hypsipyle wants and needs, apparently, is a Lemnian song filled with happy memories—but finding such a song is an impossibility, which is the point of the present song. Thus Hypsipyle, like Electra, doubly rejects the advice of her chorus: not only does she refuse to watch the army and thus harmonize her song's topic with theirs, she also rejects the notion that song will bring relief, not even if the Muse were to join her (reading the prepositional phrase *meta Kalliopas* as concessive). She sings herself into a paradox, exploring the ineffectuality of song while saying so in a song itself.

The notion that music cannot cure grief is not new to Euripides; the Nurse in *Medea* says that the poets of old who wrote songs for dinners and banquets were in no ways wise (*ouden ti sophous*, 190), since none of them discovered how to bring bitter grief to an end (*stygious lypas pauein*) by means of their music (*mousêi*) and songs sung to the lyre (*polychordois ôidais*, 195–197). But the Nurse in *Medea* is not the person who is suffering, nor is she singing. Hypsipyle therefore makes a bold statement by singing her own song that says song cannot console. Like Electra, Hypsipyle is past change. If more of the play survived, we might be able to tell whether Hypsipyle's resistance has the same skewed and resentful vision as Euripides' Electra, or whether her insistence on the impotence of comfort is akin to the nobility of Sophocles' Electra. The surviving recognition duet from the end of the drama indicates that Hypsipyle will learn that her one son has been trained by Orpheus in the music of the Asian lyre; according to tradition, he will go on to become the founder of a clan of musical experts (specifically lyre-players) in Athens.[18] Music and song will be shown in the end to have positive effects. But as far as the audience's initial introduction to Hypsipyle is concerned, her duet with the chorus women ends with her miserable longing unrelieved.

[17] Scodel (1997), 93.
[18] Wilson (2000), 448.

c. *Alcestis*

The *epirrhematic amoibaion* from *Alcestis* (lines 244–279) can also be read as a scene of female self-assertion and resistance to comfort. In this play (first performed in 438 BCE), King Admetus of Pherae in Thessaly was fated to die, until the god Apollo (who had spent some time in servitude to Admetus) decreed that Admetus' life would be spared if any person agreed to die in his place. The only person who agreed to do so was his wife, Alcestis. The *epirrhematic amoibaion* is one of the earliest scenes in the play, preceded only by a prologue with the gods Apollo and Death, and a choral entrance which developed into a dialogue with a maidservant, who described Alcestis' tearful farewell to her household and her marriage bed.

Having agreed to die in place of her husband Admetus, Alcestis is rolled out of the house to say her final goodbyes to her husband and children. While Alcestis describes her imminent death in lyrics, Admetus tries to share her experience in spoken trimeters, not so much by showing sympathy as by protesting how her death affects him. In this particular scene, the characterization of singer and speaker is matched perfectly with the conventional metrical pattern of the duet. In *Electra* and *Hypsipyle*, the strophic structure of the *parodos* was significant in constructing a "musical anti-dialogue" (to use Carson's term again) between heroine and chorus. Similarly, the *epirrhematic amoibaion* of *Alcestis* is a meaningful structure which, by pitting a singer against a speaker, gives the dramatic impression that the speaker (Admetus) is unable to persuade the singer (Alcestis) to leave off lyrics and speak rationally; instead, the speaker at last resorts to imitating (but not joining in) the singer's mode by changing to anapests. Furthermore, the singer's lyrics are strophic, so that Alcestis—like Electra and Hypsipyle—speaks and replies only to herself.

Alcestis' song falls into three basic parts: first, she addresses what is familiar: the sun, sky and clouds (244–245) and the land and marriage chambers she will leave behind (248–249). Second, she describes what is new and strange: images of the underworld: the approach of Charon who speaks to her (252–256) and winged Death which has taken hold of her (259–263). Thirdly she returns to the present moment: she instructs her attendants to let her lie flat, then addresses her children as darkness creeps over her eyes, presumably an indication that she faints (273–299). Alcestis does not include her husband as a participant in her visions, except for the brief parenthetical *ouch horais?* ("Don't you see?") at 259–

260 when she feels herself being carried away by a force which she soon identifies as winged Death. Except for this one instance, Alcestis' ecstatic song excludes mention of her husband, and ends instead with an address to her children. Through it all, Alcestis is connected with the invisible and supernatural—Death—but it is invisible to everyone *except* her.

Meanwhile, Admetus' interspersed trimeter responses attempt to include himself in Alcestis' suffering:

ΑΛ. Ἅλιε καὶ φάος ἁμέρας
οὐράνιαί τε δῖ-
ναι νεφέλας δρομαίου.
ΑΔ. ὁρᾷ σε κἀμέ, δύο κακῶς πεπραγότας,
οὐδὲν θεοὺς δράσαντας ἀνθ' ὅτου θανῇ.

ALCESTIS: (singing) *Oh Sun, and light of day,*
and in the sky
eddies of whirling cloud!
ADMETUS: He sees you and me, two unfortunates,
who have done nothing to the gods for which you should die.
Alcestis 244–247

This exchange which begins the duet sets the dynamic that follows; the man takes up a theme (here, the sun) which the woman invokes in song and applies it to himself and his perspective (that as far as he is concerned, he and his wife have offended no gods). He begs his wife to raise herself up, and not to leave him (250); Alcestis does not respond in kind. When Alcestis says she can see Charon, Admetus says she is describing a journey *pikran moi* ("bitter to *me*," 258). The road to death which Alcestis must travel is again referred to by Admetus as sorrowful for *him* most of all (264). After the last stanza of his wife's song, Admetus shifts to anapests, suggesting that he is trying to imitate (or at least approximate) her musical mode of expression, but he does not participate in lyric meters.

The *amoibaion* is the perfect scene to begin a play that continues to explore just what sort of man would allow his wife to die in his place. The play will end happily—the visiting Heracles will go to the underworld and rescue Alcestis from the dead—but before then, there is much character development of this man who berates his elderly father for not agreeing to die (629–672), and also describes the lamentations for his wife as being those for a woman who was *othneios* yet *anankaia domois* ("outside the family," yet "connected to/necessary for the household," 533) in order to persuade Heracles to remain as

his guest. This same Admetus cannot even bring himself to enter his own house after Alcestis' funeral, so tormented is he by memories of their happy marriage and dread for the empty furniture she used to occupy (912–925, 941–950). Many have interpreted the duet, which is our first glimpse of Admetus, and its difference in meter as indicative of Admetus' inability to appreciate fully or identify with what his wife suffers on his behalf, making this a classic passage in discussions of the varying emotional levels of singer and speaker in *amoibaia*. Shirley Barlow, for example, described Admetus as "wrapped up in his own platitudes and concern for his own grief."[19] Lavinia Lorch wrote of "the moral, emotional and physical gap that looms now larger between the two."[20] Hannah Roisman commented that the musical accompaniment of Alcestis' lines "yet further reinforces the discrepancy between her emotional-filled farewell and his pragmatic concern."[21] But what if we interpret Alcestis' song not just as emotion, but also as communication? In her song she asserts an element of control. She resists Admetus' interruptions of her song and is not distracted from relating the images of the underworld—Charon and Death—that she sees. As lyric, the aural focalizer, invites us to look at the world through Alcestis' eyes, Admetus' trimeters only reinforce his own detachment from Alcestis' spiritual experience in which we share. It is as though husband and wife are existing in two different planes of reality. Alcestis hears Admetus speak as if he were the one dying, and he glosses over any mention of himself being the source of his wife's death. His admonition to her to resist death and fight it (277) is a grotesquely insensitive gesture that reminds the audience that he knows his life is dependent on her immediate demise. But this same admonition is the key to this scene: Alcestis does not resist death; she resists Admetus' ingenuous interruptions. Her refusal to leave her ecstatic state, or to share it with anyone, signifies her acceptance of the images of death exactly for what they are—the end of *her* life, not her husband's, despite what Admetus might think. Her persistence in song is an attempt to impose her vision of the world on the uncomprehending Admetus. The immediate tragedy of the situation is that Admetus, simply because he will survive and she will not, possesses the greater power. His anapests at the end of

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[19] Barlow (1971), 57.
[20] Lorch (1988), 76.
[21] Roisman (2000), 187.

the *amoibaion* might be read as the sudden realization on his part that Alcestis is actually dying; but her influence on Admetus' reality is short-lived, and the rest of the play explores just how faithful Admetus is to that influence.

d. *Hermione in* Andromache

Similarly, the *epirrhematic amoibaion* between Hermione and her Nurse in *Andromache* is an attempt by Hermione to impose her perception of reality on the uncomprehending Nurse. This play dramatizes the very end of the Trojan War cycle of myths, with Hector's widow Andromache enslaved in Phthia as the Asian concubine of Neoptolemus, the son of her husband's murderer, Achilles. Neoptolemus also has a legal Greek wife, Hermione, the only child of Menelaus and Helen of Sparta. *Andromache* is one of the most 'episodic' of Euripides' plays, with the title role of Andromache leaving the stage in mid-play and (most likely) not returning. Neoptolemus himself never appears in the play except as a corpse at the finale, having been murdered by Orestes at Delphi presumably before the play even started. The scene of the play is the palace in Phthia where Neoptolemus' grandfather Peleus is in residence; Andromache takes refuge at a shrine of the goddess Thetis, Peleus' divine wife. Andromache has borne her master a son (often called Molossus), but Hermione—the legal wife—has proved barren. The first part of the play consists of Hermione's plot (with the help of her father Menelaus) to kill Andromache by capturing her son in order to persuade her to leave the refuge of Thetis' shrine. But the arrival of Peleus sends Menelaus packing, and the focus of the drama now turns to Hermione.

Having failed in her attempt to kill her husband's concubine, Hermione's insecurities surface violently as she rages onto the stage, convinced that her husband will kill her. She sings of her fears of what her husband will do to her, and how she might escape—all unreal and invisible things that cannot be communicated in mere trimeters. She cares nothing for her reputation, which in this scene is the one thing her Nurse tries to protect. Knowing that everyone will learn of the murder she had planned, Hermione feels so exposed in the metaphorical sense that she has no concern for exposing herself literally by casting off her veil and baring and beating her breasts (830–835). For the first section of this *epirrhematic amoibaion*, Hermione's lines are strophic, so that, like the other women examined so far, she responds musically to herself.

The Nurse interjects spoken iambic trimeters which are reassuring in tone, whether or not they are sincere or realistic.

Those interested in pointing out lyric's emotion would highlight that the Nurse's apparently rational statement that Neoptolemus will surely forgive Hermione for her misdeeds (840) and her observation that Hermione is not the first person to suffer misfortune (851) intensify, by contrast, Hermione's irrational state. Hermione refuses her advice:

> ποῦ μοι πυρὸς φίλα φλόξ;
> ποῦ δ' ἐκ πέτρας ἀερθῶ,
> ⟨ἢ⟩ κατὰ πόντον ἢ καθ' ὕλαν ὀρέων,
> ἵνα θανοῦσα νερτέροισιν μέλω;
>
> ἔλιπες ἔλιπες, ὦ πάτερ, ἐπακτίαν
> μονάδ' ἔρημον οὖσαν ἐνάλου κώπας.
> ὀλεῖ μ' ὀλεῖ με δηλαδὴ
> πόσις· οὐκέτι τᾷδ' ἐνοικήσω
> νυμφιδίῳ στέγᾳ.
> τίνος ἄγαλμα θεῶν ἱκέτις ὁρμαθῶ;
> ἢ δούλα δούλας γόνασι προσπέσω;
> Φθιάδος ἐκ γᾶς
> κυανόπτερος ὄρνις εἴθ' εἴην,
> πευκᾶεν σκάφος ᾇ διὰ κυανέ-
> ας ἐπέρασεν ἀκτάς,
> πρωτόπλους πλάτα.
>
> HERMIONE: (singing) *Where is the dear flame of fire?*
> *Where might I leap from a cliff,*
> *either along the sea or in the woods of the mountains,*
> *so I may die and be a care to those below?*
>
> *You abandoned, abandoned me, father, on the shore*
> *alone, without a sea-dipped oar.*
> *He'll kill me! Of course my husband will kill me!*
> *No more shall I dwell in this*
> *bridal house!*
> *To which statue of the gods shall I run as suppliant?*
> *Or shall I fall as a slave before the knees of my slave?*
> *O that I were a dark-winged bird*
> *(leaving) the land of Phthia*
> *to the place where the ship of pine*
> *passed through the dark rocks—*
> *the first ship that ever sailed!* *Andromache* 847–850, 856–865

Hermione had tried to kill herself within the house and now looks for a grander means of suicide—being struck by lightning, or jumping to her death—to avoid facing her husband's wrath. These means of

death that Hermione invokes are notably traditional to extant tragedy. The wish to be struck by lightning (*pyros phlox, Andromache* 847) is also made by Medea (*Medea* 144), Adrastus (Eur. *Suppliant Women* 831), and Io (*Prometheus Bound* 852). Suicide by falling from a cliff is what happens to Ino (recounted by the Corinthian women of *Medea* 1282–1289), and to Evadne (Eur. *Suppliant Women* 1071, where she lands in her husband's funeral pyre). Nicole Loraux demonstrated the equation between 'leaping' and 'hanging,' wrapped up in the derivatives of the Greek verb *aeirô*. In Loraux's words,

> The same word, *aeirô*, which means elevation and suspension, applies to these two flights in opposite directions, upward and downward, as though height had its own depth: as though the place below—whether it be the ground, or the world under that—could be reached only by first rising up.… Falling from the heights of a rock or held in the noose, it makes no difference.[22]

It is therefore no accident that the Nurse's description of Hermione trying to hang herself within the house (811–813) is followed by Hermione's fantasies of flight and metamorphosis into a bird; the imagery of "elevation and suspension" is invoked from one death wish to the other. The desire to be transformed into a bird and thus escape by flight through the air is common to both choruses and actors in tragedy, and it is always articulated in lyrics.[23] This phenomenon which Ruth Padel has coined the "imagery of the elsewhere" is one which:

> …, sung during the enactment off-stage of a crisis in the drama, creates mythological and pictorial associations that lead to a lyric vision of the appropriate action, and reassembles motifs of the play in a new mode, as a dream regroups the thoughts and events of the waking day.[24]

Hermione significantly invokes the ship Argo—not that she wants to become the Argo, but a bird who could fly to where the Argo first

[22] Loraux (1987), 18–19.

[23] The women of Troezen at *Hippolytus* 732–734, the chorus of slave women at *Helen* 1478–1494, another chorus of slave women at *Ion* 1238–1239, and the chorus of men of Colonus at Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* 1081 express the desire for wings and flight. The chorus women of the fragmentary *Phaethon* wish to set their winged feet into heaven at 270–273. Creusa at *Ion* 796–798 also wishes she could fly away, and says so in lyrics. Polymestor asks for wings at *Hecuba* 1099–1105, also in lyrics. Sophocles' fragment 476 (presumably from *Oenomaus)*, also lyrical, reads: ⟨εἰ γὰρ⟩ γενοίμαν αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτας / ὡς ἀμποταθείην ὑπὲρ ἀτρυγέτου / γλαυκᾶς ἐπ' οἶδμα λίμνας ("If only I could become a lofty-flying eagle, so I could fly beyond the barrenness, over the wave of the gleaming sea."). Kock inserted αἰθέρος after ὑπέρ, "beyond the barren aether."

[24] Padel (1974), 241.

sailed.[25] But why the Argo? On the one hand, the Argo was renowned for sailing to the ends of the earth, to Colchis, even farther than the voyage Hermione's father Menelaus took to Troy. Michael Lloyd suggests that her longing to travel the distance of the legendary ship repeats the imagery of her abandonment by her father *erêmon ousan enalou kôpas*, "without a sea-dipped oar," meaning that she is essentially without a ship of her own to sail away in.[26] But there is a further level to the mythological element. In *Hypsipyle*, as discussed above, the Argo at least formed a part of Hypsipyle's personal history, so that it became her favorite topic in her songs. By contrast, the events of Euripides' *Andromache* are, chronologically speaking, at the very end of the mythological narrative of extant tragedy, and thus as far removed from the age of the Argonauts as possible. Hermione wants to be far elsewhere from her present crisis not only physically, but also temporally. Furthermore, Hermione wishes to fly to the Dark Rocks (Cyaneae), often identified with the Wandering Rocks (Planctae) and Clashing Rocks (Symplegades). But are these the Cyaneae of her own time, or of mythical time? We do not know whether Euripides was aware of the myth that the Cyaneae/ Symplegades fused together after the Argo passed through them; but even were he aware, he would not have been obliged to adopt that myth.[27] A couple possible readings emerge: if the Cyaneae are fused in Hermione's narrative time, then what she longs for is to fly away temporally—escape by time-travel—by invoking a passage through the rocks which cannot, in her own time, be achieved because the rocks are fused. But if the Cyaneae are still clashing, then perhaps what Hermione yearns for with her dark-winged bird image of the elsewhere is a more unconventional kind of suicide: death by crushing, like

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[25] This reading is based on Boethe's suggestion of ᾇ for the ἃ of the MSS, line 863. In Lloyd's (1994: ad 863) words, this "supplies an indication of the direction of the flight, usual in these wishes, and avoids the absurdity offered by MSS of Herm[ione] wishing to be the Argo."

[26] Lloyd (1994), ad 863.

[27] On the confusion in the ancient world between the Cyaneae, Planctae, and Symplegades, see Page (1938), ad 2. At *Odyssey* 12.61–72, the Planctae (where Scylla and Charybdis live) are described as still in motion, even though in the past, the Argo did go through them with the help of Hera. These Planctae do crash into each other. Euripides' contemporary Herodotus 4.85 mentions the Cyaneae which the Greeks believed had once floated (πλαγκτάς), the implication being that they no longer floated in Herodotus' day; these Cyaneae are located at the Bosporus. Two centuries after Euripides, Apollonius of Rhodes described the fusing of the Symplegades at *Argonautica* 2.604–606, brought about by Athene, but makes a distinction between the Symplegades at the entrance to the Bosporus, and the Planctae which form the Straits of Messina.

the tremulous doves at *Odyssey* 12.63–65 who fly past the Planctae to bring ambrosia to Zeus, yet the rocks kill one of them each time, so that the number of doves has to be replaced by Zeus himself.

All of this lyrical imagery of escape and suicide might appear to signify a feminine lack of control. Yet in the midst of this apparent absence of control, Hermione can be read as showing resistance by the very refusal to act rationally. Rather than being simply an hysterical woman, Hermione deliberately subverts the dominant expectation of her. She is certain of how events stand for her, a reality that she alone can perceive in detail, thereby demanding communication in lyrics. She is convinced that her husband will kill her when he arrives home, and she therefore wants to die like a woman in tragedy, a death which has a status she would lose if she were to be murdered by Neoptolemus. She grabs a noose and sings of lightning and leaping from cliffs and of flying away on wings—all typically associated with female death in tragedy. She even grabs a sword within the house (813), another means of female suicide, familiar from Jocasta in *Phoenician Women* and Sophocles' Deianeira. In contrast to such suicides, the murder of a wife by her husband is, in extant tragedy at least, not a plot device commonly employed; even when it does happen, the wife dies willingly (*Alcestis*), or is killed in a fit of divinely-inspired madness (Megara in *Heracles)*, or is killed by accident (the death of Procris invoked in the *parodos* of *Hypsipyle)*. The scenario that Hermione fears—that her husband will kill her out of anger at her plotting—does not occur in extant tragedy, and may even have been avoided. That is, Hermione finds herself in a situation very similar to that of her own mother, Helen, whose plotting—more than that of any other woman—notoriously deserved death at the hands of her husband, who himself was equally notorious for having spared her when captivated once again by her exposed breasts (*Andromache* 627–631). When Hermione exposes her own breasts at 832, the analogy to her mother cannot be lost on the audience. Public nudity in itself, by violating the conventional norms of tragic female behavior, is suggestive of Helen, who in this play is the ultimate violator of female norms. But whereas Helen's nudity was successful in saving her life from the point of her husband's sword, Hermione—apparently not having inherited her mother's features—makes no mention that her own beauty will have the power to persuade Neoptolemus to spare her. Instead she wants to kill herself, embrace the tragic genre by dying like women in tragedy do, and deflect the alternative: an undignified murder of a scheming wife by her husband. What the Nurse considers

unseemly female behavior—the exposing of the breasts, self-display in front of the house (876), and grabbing a sword to commit suicide (812, 844)—are what Hermione embraces as an expression and illustration of her new reality of impending doom.

It is useful to describe the dynamic expressed by Electra, Hypsipyle, Alcestis and Hermione with their interlocutors as one of resistance and authority. These women insist that they see what they see, know what they know, and believe what they believe. Resistance becomes an empowering gesture, in the sense that 'power' has been redefined by feminist Susan Gal:

> … the strongest form of power may well be the ability to define social reality, to impose visions of the world. And such visions are inscribed in language and, most importantly, enacted in interaction. Although women's everyday talk and women's voice or consciousness have been studied separately, I have argued that both can be understood as strategic responses, often of resistance, to dominant hegemonic cultural forms.[28]

Euripides' heroines offer resistance in this very way, as an attempt to hold to their visions of the world against the dominant opinion. But this is a dynamic very different from other authoritative use of tragic women's language, such as is found in laments. As Gail Holst-Warhaft (1992) and Helene Foley (1993) have shown, lamentations in the voices of women (such as Antigone or the chorus of Eur. *Suppliant Women)* are politically dangerous and can incite an audience of men to action. Theirs is a voice of 'resistance' geared to effecting change. Electra, Hypsipyle, Alcestis, and Hermione, however, do not change their status through their songs, nor is their potential audience (women, a petulant husband, a nurse) in any position to offer assistance to the woman's condition. Lamentation is not absent from these songs, but it is a lamentation of the self; even Electra, whom one would expect to mourn a murdered father, is less focused on Agamemnon than on what she considers her own personal mistreatment. Though geared towards convincing others to recognize and validate the woman's individual pain, these songs of resistance serve a less pro-active purpose, in that the women's interlocutors are not moved to action; in fact, quite the opposite, since the interlocutors' help and advice are rejected. This is significant, since Euripides was clearly capable of creating heroines who, in other situations, were comfortable with taking choruses of

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[28] Gal (1995), 178.

women into their confidence (e.g., Creusa, Phaedra, Medea, Helen in her name play).

A typical 'resistance' pattern emerges.[29] To begin with Electra and Hypsipyle: both heroines begin their plays by speaking with choruses of female friends who try to offer comfort with platitudes. The friends try to persuade each heroine to cease her lamentations because grief comes to everyone, and she is not the first to suffer; moderation is best, and help will come from the gods. Yet these heroines reject their friends' advice and define their own experiences as isolating. This pattern is unusually engaging because of the dramatic expectations it sets up. In domestic plays, female neighbors (always in the form of choruses) constitute the chief community to which a heroine belongs. It has long been observed that no intrigue can be successful in tragedy without the complicity of the chorus; therefore heroines and choruses of neighbors must from the outset earn each other's trust. Songs of resistance complicate these expectations; by refusing to take advice and thereby potentially alienating the friends on whom she might later need to rely, Electra and Hypsipyle create an immediate dramatic tension that toys with an audience's guesses on how their isolation might be resolved.

Also, by refusing to be distracted from her thoughts (and this applies to all the heroines above), the singing female character places herself in a role that separates her from a collective experience and individualizes her for the theater audience.[30] Her insistence that her actions are appropriate is an assertion of power—an attempt to impose visions of the world on others, as Susan Gal has redefined it—in situations where power is conspicuously absent. The singers will not be subsumed by others; theirs are not songs of submission, but songs of insistence, even when their status does not change except for the intervention of a male figure/relative.

The authoritative voice of the fictional female is a crucial element in Euripides' dramatic project. He evidently wanted his audience to

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[29] It is important to note that this is not solely a Euripidean pattern. Compare the *parodoi* of Sophocles' *Electra* (also written as a lyric exchange) and *Women of Trachis*, in which a chorus of women tries to comfort the heroine, but with no success and much rejection.

[30] The case of Alcestis is somewhat special, inasmuch as her isolation and insistence on her vision of the world have real implications for how one interprets the character of Admetus later in the play. Thus Alcestis not only individualizes herself, but reflects on others.

care about a woman's particular world view, even if her singing about it does not change her status. By allowing an audience to glimpse the interior world of a heroine through song—the aural focalizer—replete with connections to the unseen and the absent, to which only she has access, Euripides sets in motion a series of dramatic premises: that these women need help, that they believe they are past change, that they cannot help themselves. These women could communicate just by speech and make a play; instead, more effectively, their powerlessness is expressed not through speech or silence, but through song, in which the focus is always on the women's answers, and less on their interlocutor's questions.

If there is a lesson to be learned from these songs, it is that tragic women have to face their grief alone. Despite the initial reaction of most modern readers of Greek tragedy, the ownership of grief is not pointless whining. Whether grief is real or imaginary, it is not all the same; it cannot be explained away as something that happens to everyone, but must be faced and dealt with on the individual level.[31] As much as an understanding chorus or nurse or husband might talk about moving forward, songs of resistance communicate that the ownership of grief can be empowering, even when circumstances are the least stable.

Female Lyric as Transition: Two Early Plays

Another of Euripides' effective uses of the *epirrhematic amoibaion* is to mark a dramatic transition point. In *Andromache* and *Hecuba* (two plays often criticized for being 'episodic'), the lyric moment signals a change in a female character's self-awareness at a crucial moment of plot transition. The situation in which the singer finds herself is one of crisis; but far from being merely reflective poetry or the words of a raving emotional woman, the lyric moment is one of self-persuasion for the singer.

To return to *Andromache*: the *amoibaion* between Hermione and her Nurse (lines 825–865) is a transitional point in that it refocuses the char-

[31] I am reminded of Ralph Rackstraw's recitative from W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore* (first performed in 1878): "I know the value of a kindly chorus, / but choruses give little consolation / when we have pain—and sorrow, too—before us."

acterization of a main character and divides the play into two portions. During the first half of the play, the chorus (and audience) had sympathy for Andromache's plight as the widow of Hector, the captive of Neoptolemus, the desperate mother of a child marked for death, and the persecuted victim of the bitter and insecure Hermione. In this first half, Andromache was the main singer, and her songs (her elegy at 103–116, and her *kommos* with her son at 501–544 against Menelaus' chanted anapests) made her the emotional center of attention. Now, with the present *amoibaion*, lyric makes Hermione the central focus, and Andromache is never heard from again. It is Hermione's story that occupies this section of the drama, but Hermione does not simply duplicate her rival. Although by the end of the play they appear structurally to have repeated each other's lives (sharing the bed of the same man, and each marrying the man—or son of the man—who kills their first husband), Hermione is significantly Andromache's opposite. Andromache's first song in the play had been sung in grief for the past; Hermione's song is in fear of the immediate future. Andromache had been willing to sacrifice her own life to save a son; Hermione overzealously seeks to kill herself to avoid her husband's wrath. At the end of her song, Hermione asks herself what god's statue she can run to as a suppliant (859), just as Andromache had taken refuge at Thetis' statue at the opening of the play. Hermione then realizes instantly that this option is not open to her; she knows she has exchanged roles with her rival, and wonders if she must fall at the feet of her own slave (860), just as earlier Andromache had fallen at the feet of Menelaus. The *amoibaiaon*, then, highlights the striking change Hermione has undergone from the haughty, self-assured mistress of the house who, at the start of the play, had claimed she had the right to say whatever she wanted (153).

Euripides' *Hecuba* is a drama about the queen of Troy's loss of all her children in the aftermath of the Trojan War. The play's setting is an army camp in Thrace, where the Greeks are on their homeward journey from the sack of Troy. The ghost of Hecuba's son, Polydorus, gives the prologue (1–58) and describes how he was murdered out of greed by Polymestor, the king of Thrace, to whom he had been sent as a child (along with much gold) for safe-keeping during the early days of the war. Polydorus also predicts how his body will wash ashore, and how his sister Polyxena will be killed, all in the course of this play. The first part of the play focuses on Polyxena's death. Odysseus arrives (218) to explain how the Greeks have voted to sacrifice the girl on Achilles'

tomb (Polydorus in his prologue already indicated that Achilles' ghost had demanded the sacrifice). Polyxena is eager to die and shows no cowardice at the prospect of death (341–377); her sacrifice is narrated in great detail, including her baring of her breasts (522–580); Hecuba gets permission to bury her body and sends her aged maidservant (*therapaina*) to fetch water (609) to bathe the corpse.

But the maidservant returns (657) with horrible news, and a different corpse. Hecuba presumes it is her daughter Polyxena, but when the body is unveiled, it is in fact Polydorus, the son she had thought was alive and safe. After a trimeter response to the corpse itself:

> οἴμοι, βλέπω δὴ παῖδ' ἐμὸν τεθνηκότα,
> Πολύδωρον, ὅν μοι Θρὴξ ἔσῳζ' οἴκοις ἀνήρ.

> HECUBA: *Oimoi!* In fact I see my son dead,
> Polydorus, whom the Thracian man was keeping safe for me in his home.
> *Hecuba* 681–682

Hecuba bursts into lyric meter as the pain of her son's death rushes upon her. In this three-way *epirrhematic amoibaion*, 683–723, the chorus of Trojan women and the maidservant respond in trimeters:

> ΕΚ. ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, οὐκέτ' εἰμὶ δή.
> ὦ τέκνον τέκνον,
> αἰαῖ, κατάρχομαι νόμον
> βακχεῖον, ἐξ ἀλάστορος
> ἀρτιμαθὴς κακῶν.
> ΧΟ. ἔγνως γὰρ ἄτην παιδός, ὦ δύστηνε σύ;
> ΕΚ. ἄπιστ' ἄπιστα, καινὰ καινὰ δέρκομαι.
> ἕτερα δ' ἀφ' ἑτέρων κακὰ κακῶν κυρεῖ,
> οὐδέ ποτ' ἀστένακτος ἀδάκρυτος ἁ-
> μέρα 'πισχήσει.
> ΧΟ. δείν', ὦ τάλαινα, δεινὰ πάσχομεν κακά.
> ΕΚ. ὦ τέκνον τέκνον ταλαίνας ματρός,
> τίνι μόρῳ θνῄσκεις, τίνι πότμῳ κεῖσαι,
> πρὸς τίνος ἀνθρώπων;
> ΘΕ. οὐκ οἶδ'· ἐπ' ἀκταῖς νιν κυρῶ θαλασσίαις.
> ΕΚ. ἔκβλητον ἢ πέσημα φοινίου δορὸς
> ἐν ψαμάθῳ λευρᾷ;
> ΘΕ. πόντου νιν ἐξήνεγκε πελάγιος κλύδων.
> ΕΚ. ὤμοι αἰαῖ,
> ἔμαθον ἐνύπνιον ὀμμάτων
> ἐμῶν ὄψιν (οὔ με παρέβα φάντα-
> σμα μελανόπτερον),
> ἃν ἐσεῖδον ἀμφὶ σοῦ,
> ὦ τέκνον, οὐκέτ' ὄντος Διὸς ἐν φάει.
> ΧΟ. τίς γάρ νιν ἔκτειν'; οἶσθ' ὀνειρόφρων φράσαι;

ΕΚ. ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ξένος, Θρῄκιος ἱππότας,
ἵν' ὁ γέρων πατὴρ ἔθετό νιν κρύψας.
ΧΟ. οἴμοι, τί λέξεις; χρυσὸν ὡς ἔχοι κτανών;
ΕΚ. ἄρρητ' ἀνωνόμαστα, θαυμάτων πέρα,
οὐχ ὅσι' οὐδ' ἀνεκτά. ποῦ δίκα ξένων;
ὦ κατάρατ' ἀνδρῶν, ὡς διεμοιράσω
χρόα, σιδαρέῳ τεμὼν φασγάνῳ
μέλεα τοῦδε παιδὸς οὐδ' ᾤκτισας.

HECUBA: (singing) *I am lost, miserable, I exist no more!*
O child, child,
aiai! I begin a Bacchic melody
from an avenging power,
learning only now of evils.
CHORUS: So you knew about your son's destruction, oh miserable one?[32]
HECUBA: *Incredible, incredible, strange, strange things I see.*
One misfortune proceeds from one, another from another,
and no day will ever pass without groans
and without tears.
CHORUS: Terrible, oh miserable woman, we suffer terrible misfortunes.
HECUBA: *Oh child, child of a wretched mother,*
how did you die, by what fate do you lie here,
at whose hand among men?
MAIDSERVANT: I don't know. I found him on the sea-shore.
HECUBA: *Cast up, or felled by a murderous spear*
on the smooth sand?
MAIDSERVANT: The sea-waves brought him out of the sea.
HECUBA: *Ômoi aiai!*
Now I understand my eyes' vision in my sleep
(*the black-winged phantom*
did not escape me),
the vision that I saw of you,
oh child, now no more living in the light of Zeus.
CHORUS: Who slew him, then? Are you able to say by interpreting the dream?
HECUBA: *It was my own, my own guest-friend, the horseman of Thrace,*
where his elderly father had placed him in hiding.
CHORUS: *Oimoi!* What will you say? That he slew him to get the gold?

[32] There is a double entendre in line 688. Either the chorus is responding to Hecuba's use of *artimathês*, and is asking whether Hecuba had a premonition that Polydorus was dead (e.g., from her dream); or, the chorus is saying, "And so you now recognize your son's curse *(atê)?*" (using the aorist of instantaneous action), in which case the son is Paris, whose culpability for the whole Trojan War was the topic of the chorus' song at 629ff. Mossman (1995), 85 and 167 argues that the chorus significantly misunderstand Hecuba's words as referring to Paris.

HECUBA: *Unspeakable, unnamable, beyond wonder,*
impious, not to be endured! Where is the law of guest-fiends?
Oh accursed of men, how you mangled
his flesh, and when with an iron sword you had carved
this boy's limbs, you did not feel pity! *Hecuba* 683–720

It is through the medium of song that Hecuba expresses her awful realizations: that her vision of her son Polydorus' ghost at the very start of the play was indeed real; and that Polymestor—her family's *ally*, of all people—was responsible for his death. The chorus and maidservant respond to her lyrics with iambics that offer information to her frenzied questions and express honest incredulity at the description of her dream. Already a prisoner of war in the Trojan camp at the start of the drama, Hecuba is homeless and childless, bereft of her last living son and the last daughter who was in a position to accompany her mother into exile. At this climax of events, Hecuba's only response can be lamentation. Strewn throughout Hecuba's lyrics are the classic pathetic expressions of tragedy, such as *oimoi* (681), *ômoi aiai* (702), the reference to herself as *talaina* (694), and the insistence that she no longer exists (*ouket' eimi dê*, 683).[33] Pain, tears, and groans are also thematic (692–694). She even refers to her song in musical terms; she is making a beginning (*katarchomai*) of a *nomos Bakcheios*, or "Bacchic strain" which she has just learnt from an *alastôr*, or spirit of vengeance.[34]

Hecuba is not a play in which the female victim simply dissolves into tears and vanishes; yet scholars are at some disagreement as to how one should interpret the transition in Hecuba's character. Martha Nussbaum argues that lines 684ff. signal the beginning of Hecuba's 'moral decline': "Revenge, for Hecuba, is the *nomos* that fills the place left by the collapse of the old."[35] Judith Mossman, however, argues against the idea of a 'moral decline,' since such a broad interpretation of Hecuba's character "depends on a feeling that revenge is a bad thing, automatically culpable in moral terms," something which the ancient audience need not have presumed.[36] Yet all scholars agree that the second half of the play is a complete reversal of the first, and Hecuba the victim takes powerful revenge against Polymestor, the murderer of

[33] McClure (1995), 45–48 suggested that some of these expressions (such as *oi 'gô talaina)* are gendered, or rather female-preferred, in the Euripidean corpus.

[34] See Mossman (1995), 167, n. 8 for an excellent explanation of alternative readings of this passage. We follow Diggle (1984).

[35] Nussbaum (1986), 409.

[36] Mossman (1995), 169.

her son. The *amoibaion* serves as the bridge between these two halves. The lyrics not only bring Hecuba's grief into sharp focus; they also highlight her indignation at the injustice of her ally's betrayal. From lines 710 forward, she directs her song towards Polymestor, angrily cursing him as *ô katarat' andrôn* (716) and musing on how he felt no pity when he had carved (*temôn*) her son's flesh (718–720). These last words of hers are followed almost immediately by the entrance of Agamemnon, who affords Hecuba the opportunity to carry out her vengeance on Polymestor. The exchange of lyric and trimeter between Hecuba and the chorus women and maidservant, then, is the transitional point in Hecuba's role from victim to survivor and from the object of pity to the pitiless (and, some would argue, unsympathetic) avenger. She will become the same beast she had accused Polymestor of being at the end of her *amoibaion*: just as he carved her son's flesh, she will carve the limbs of Polymestor's children, an act for which she will feel no mercy or pity.

Hermione and Hecuba break into song at the moments when they acknowledge their powerlessness. But even so, it should be remembered that this is not where the plays end. These women both take control of their lives immediately after their songs, Hecuba by revenge and Hermione by allying herself with Orestes. Both women must acknowledge and own their grief and fear in order to move forward; they must persuade themselves that they have something yet to live for. If this is so, then the fact that they sing at all in mid-play would signal to the audience that something must change. As seen with women's song of resistance, Euripides' characters rarely curl up and disappear when faced with misfortune; whether verbally or physically, they fight back.

Female Lyric as Interrogation

In Chapter 2, it was argued that Euripidean women in recognition duets use lyric meter to share their private knowledge with others. This next section explores how women also sing to ask questions. This happens in scenes where the singer has a strong investment in the answers to the questions; that is, the questions are not random, but are about the history of loved ones. Furthermore, the singer's reactions to the answers are perhaps more important than the answers themselves. Examples of this are the *epirrhematic amoibaia* of *Hypsipyle, Trojan Women*, and *Phoenician Women.*

a. Hypsipyle

In the second half of the surviving recognition duet of *Hypsipyle*, the singing Hypsipyle asks her sons how they were raised and how it happened that they returned to Lemnos to look for her.

ΥΨ. ἀλλὰ σὺ πῶς ἐτράφης ὅδε τ', ἐν τίνι
  χειρί, τέκνον; ὦ τέκνον,
  ἔνεπ' ἔνεπε ματρὶ σᾷ.
ΕΥ. Ἀργώ με καὶ τόνδ' ἤγαγ' εἰς Κόλχων πόλιν.
ΥΨ. ἀπομαστίδιόν γ' ἐμῶν στέρνων.
ΕΥ. ἐπεὶ δ' Ἰάσων ἔθαν' ἐμός, μῆτερ, πατήρ—
ΥΨ. οἴμοι κακὰ λέγεις δάκρυά τ' ὄμμασιν,
  τέκνον, ἐμοῖς δίδως.
ΕΥ. Ὀρφεύς με καὶ τόνδ' ἤγαγ' εἰς Θρῄκης τόπον.
ΥΨ. τίνα πατέρι ποτὲ χάριν ἀθλίῳ
  τιθέμενος; ἔνεπέ μοι, τέκνον.
ΕΥ. μοῦσάν με κιθάρας Ἀσιάδος διδάσκεται,
  τοῦτ[ο]ν δ' ἐς Ἄρεως ὅπλ' ἐκόσμησεν μάχης.
ΥΨ. δι' Αἰγαίου δὲ τίνα πόρον ἐμ[ό]λετ'
  ἀκτὰν Λημνίαν;
ΕΥ. Θόας [κ]ομίζει σὸς πατὴρ †δυοῖν τέκνω†.
ΥΨ. ἦ γὰ[ρ] σέσ[ω]τ[α]ι;
ΕΥ.   Βα[κ]χ[ίου] γε μηχαναῖς.
ΥΨ. [   ]βό[ ]ι πόνων
  [   ] ι προσδοκία βιοτᾶς
  [ἐ]πόρευσε ματρί παῖδα σῇ

HYPSIPYLE: (singing) *But you—how were you and this one here raised,*
  by whose hand, child, oh child?
  Tell, tell your mother.
EUNEUS: The Argo brought me and him to the Colchians' city.
HYPSIPYLE: *Yes, weaned from my breast.*
EUNEUS: But, mother, when Jason, my father, died—
HYPSIPYLE: *Oimoi! you speak of something terrible, child,*
  and you give me tears for my eyes.
EUNEUS: Orpheus brought me and him to Thrace.
HYPSIPYLE: *How, then, did he show gratitude to your*
  unfortunate father? Tell me, child.
EUNEUS: He taught me the music of the Asiatic kithara,
  and he disciplined him for Ares' weapons of battle.
HYPSIPYLE: *By what path through the Aegean did you come*
  to the Lemnian shore?
EUNEUS: Thoas, your father, brought †your two children.†
HYPSIPYLE: *He's alive?*
EUNEUS: Yes, by the schemes of Bacchus.
HYPSIPYLE: … *hardships*

... expectation of life
... (Bacchus?) conveyed (his) son for your mother *Hypsipyle* 759a.90–110

Here it is the male who is offering information, yet the woman's responses are still lyrical. This is because Euneus' experiences are not of themselves painful for him, but they do cause pain in Hypsipyle. She is reminded of how her children were parted from her breast; when she learns that Jason has died, she begins to cry, and she describes Jason as unfortunate (*athlios*). Hypsipyle sings in order to remain the aural focus of the scene, for her reaction to Euneus' news is what is of interest. In fact, Euneus' responses are rather dull; lines 93 and 98 are practically identical in structure and content ("So-and-so με καὶ τόνδ' ἤγαγ' εἰς such-and-such a place"), like minor variations on a mundane theme. Euneus and his brother have had a rather carefree life; though this means little to them, it means everything to Hypsipyle who has wondered about them ever since they were separated from her as infants. Furthermore, inasmuch as Euneus' past experiences are new to her, they are also new to the theater audience. Since the play is fragmentary, we have no idea if Euneus' history was explained to anyone on stage prior to this moment; the audience could therefore be hearing it for the first time. Furthermore, Euneus' version of his life has gaps in the mythology of Jason. Euneus says that the Argo brought him and his brother to Colchis, and that after Jason's death, Orpheus brought the sons to Thrace. What happened to Medea in this narrative? Euripides' *Medea* predates *Hypsipyle* by at least twenty years, but Euripides' version of the Medea story (in which she murders her sons by Jason) was famous. The narrative of *Hypsipyle* seems to skip over important details in the Jason myth as established by Euripides himself. Were Jason's sons by Hypsipyle living with Jason all this time and somehow spared by Medea? What kind of stepmother would Medea make, dare we ask? In *Medea*, Jason was told he would die as an old man, killed by the falling prow of the Argo (*Medea* 1386–1388). Yet in Euneus' narrative in *Hypsipyle*, Jason died at the age when Euneus and his brother were still boys young enough to be taught music and martial arts by Orpheus. Hypsipyle's reaction to this news is therefore analogous to the audience's: complete surprise. Therefore, one advantage of Euneus delivering such new information in trimeter at this point is that, unburdened by musical accompaniment, it would have been to some degree more instantly intelligible to the audience.

Furthermore, Euneus is on the verge of giving details on how he and his brother were able to locate their mother; namely, they went to Lemnos (759a.104) where (presumably) they were reunited with their grandfather Thoas, the very man whose life Hypsipyle spared in defiance of all the other murderous Lemnian women. It seems likely that Thoas' life was somehow preserved by his father Dionysus, all of which is more news to Hypsipyle; the lost portions of 759a.107–110 were probably her lyrical response to the welcome news that her father lived a long life after all, and that Dionysus had a hand in restoring her children to her.[37] This confirms what the chorus had originally assured Hypsipyle in the *parodos*: that her grandfather Dionysus would find a way to rescue her. Though Hypsipyle rejected that advice at the beginning, now she realizes that events have truly come full circle, and the play can end with closure.

b. Trojan Women

Euripides' *Trojan Women*, performed as the third play in his trilogy of 415 BCE, explores the aftermath of the Trojan War and its effect on the female survivors of the Trojan royal house: queen Hecuba, her daughter Cassandra, and daughters-in-law Andromache and Helen. After a prologue delivered by the gods Poseidon and Athene over the prostrate body of Hecuba, and a *parodos* in which two semi-choruses of Trojan captive women sing with Hecuba, the action gets off to a rousing start with the arrival of the Greek Herald, Talthybius, with news of how the Trojan women (now slaves) have been allotted to Greek masters.

In the *epirrhematic amoibaion* at 235–292, Hecuba's questions to Talthybius are dotted periodically with pathetic expressions (*aiai*, 241; *moi moi*, 251; *moi egô*, 265). The absence of other emotional language in her earlier lines has allowed this scene to be delivered quite calmly in modern productions (most notably Katharine Hepburn in Cacoyannis' 1971 film); yet in the Greek text, all Hecuba's lines are sung.

ΕΚ. αἰαῖ, τίν' ἢ
Θεσσαλίας πόλιν Φθιάδος εἶπας ἢ
Καδμείας χθονός;
ΤΑ. κατ' ἄνδρ' ἑκάστη κοὐχ ὁμοῦ λελόγχατε.

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[37] Cropp suggests a translation of what might be missing from *Hypsipyle* 759a108–110, with what does survive in italics: "He had little *expectation of life*, yet Dionysus *brought (his) son* safely home *for your mother*...." (Cropp 2004: 256 ad. 1628–1631).

ΕΚ. τίν' ἄρα τίς ἔλαχε; τίνα πότμος εὐτυχὴς
'Ιλιάδων μένει;
ΤΑ. οἶδ'· ἀλλ' ἕκαστα πυνθάνου, μὴ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ.
ΕΚ. τοὐμὸν τίς ἆρ'
ἔλαχε τέκος, ἔνεπε, τλάμονα Κασσάνδραν;
ΤΑ. ἐξαίρετόν νιν ἔλαβεν Ἀγαμέμνων ἄναξ.

HECUBA: (singing) *Aiai! Which do you mean, either*
a city of Thessaly, or of Phthia, or
of the land of Cadmus?
TALTHYBIUS: Each of you has been allotted to a man, and not together.
HECUBA: *Who, then, drew whom? For which of the women of Ilium*
is there any happy future left?
TALTHYBIUS: I know; but ask things one at a time, not all together.
HECUBA: *Who drew my*
child—tell me—miserable Cassandra?
TALTHYBIUS: King Agamemnon took her; she was picked out.
Trojan Women 241–249

This *amoibaion* is a kind of introduction to the entire play (as in *Alcestis*), as Talthybius answers Hecuba's pertinent questions about the fate of her children.[38] As it is, Talthybius' iambics indicate neither calm rationality nor oblique insensitivity. He does not have the same kind of emotional distance that the male speaker Admetus demonstrated in *Alcestis*. At one point he appears to be attempting to console Hecuba by suggesting (albeit hardly comforting from Hecuba's point of view) that Cassandra is lucky to win a king's bed:

ΕΚ. ῥῖπτε, τέκνον, ζαθέους κλά-
δας καὶ ἀπὸ χροὸς ἐνδυ-
τῶν στεφέων ἱεροὺς στολμούς.
ΤΑ. οὐ γὰρ μέγ' αὐτῇ βασιλικῶν λέκτρων τυχεῖν;

HECUBA: (singing) *Cast down, child, your sacred keys*
and from your body cast the sacred garments
from the garlands that cover them.
TALTHYBIUS: Well, isn't it a great thing for her to meet with a king's bed?
Trojan Women 256–259

At another point, he is deliberately evasive and shows great adroitness in avoiding Hecuba's specific questions about Polyxena (it will later be revealed that she is dead):

[38] See Hansjürgen Popp (1971), 262–263 for a concise analysis of this *amoibaion*; he considers its content and fuction to be the best example of what a "Eurpidean" *epirrhetamikon* achieves: namely, the joining together of information and pathetic reaction. See also Mossman (2005), 357–362 for a discussion of the "multiplicity of female voices" in *Trojan Women*.

ΤΑ. Πολυξένην ἔλεξας ἢ τίν' ἱστορεῖς;
ΕΚ. ταύταν· τῷ πάλος ἔζευξεν;
ΤΑ. τύμβῳ τέτακται προσπολεῖν Ἀχιλλέως.
ΕΚ. ὤμοι ἐγώ· τάφῳ πρόσπολον ἐτεκόμαν.
  ἀτὰρ τίς ὅδ' ἦν νόμος ἢ τί
  θέσμιον, ὦ φίλος, Ἑλλάνων;
ΤΑ. εὐδαιμόνιζε παῖδα σήν· ἔχει καλῶς.
ΕΚ. τί τόδ' ἔλακες;
  ἆρά μοι ἀέλιον λεύσσει;
ΤΑ. ἔχει πότμος νιν, ὥστ' ἀπηλλάχθαι πόνων.

TALTHYBIUS: Did you mean Polyxena? Who are you asking about?
HECUBA: (singing) *Her. With whom did the lot pair her?*
TALTHYBIUS: She was appointed to attend Achilles' tomb.
HECUBA: *Ômoi egô! I was mother to an attendant for a tomb!*
  But what custom is this, or what
  institution, oh friend, among the Greeks?
TALTHYBIUS: Be happy for your daughter; she is better off.
HECUBA: *Why did you mean by that?*
  Does she at least see the sun?
TALTHYBIUS: Her fate has her, so as to be free from pains.

Trojan Women 262–271

If Euripides had wanted, he could have written this exchange as a stichomythia in trimeters and dispensed with lyric altogether. So why did he use lyric at all? Hecuba's lyric questions suggest a crescendo of tension, but not lack of emotional control, though that control gradually approaches the breaking point as Hecuba learns one by one the fate of those women (Cassandra and Andromache) who will be the focus of the rest of the play. It is not until the end of the exchange that Hecuba's temper explodes violently (*e e*, 278) upon learning she has been allotted to Odysseus, whom she considers the worst of all masters. By singing these questions to Talthybius rather than speaking them, Hecuba draws attention to herself as a figure of authority in the camp. She never lets the audience forget that she was, until recently, queen of Troy. Lyric emphasizes *her* sufferings and *her* reactions to the news about her daughters. Though her questions foreshadow Cassandra's and Andromache's involvement in the drama, what is important at this moment is that the audience understand Hecuba's intimate concern with all her daughters. It is Hecuba the sorrowful mother who is on display, and it is that persona which will persist throughout the entire tragedy, until the chorus women in their *exodos* address her as *melea mêter* (1251).

c. Phoenician Women

Euripides' *Phoenician Women* tells the story of the war of the Seven Against Thebes from the point-of-view of the beseiged city and its royal family. Jocasta gives the prologue (1–87), explaining how her husband (and son) Oedipus is locked up inside the Theban palace; unlike her namesake in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, Euripides' Jocasta did not hang herself after learning of her incestuous marriage, but instead went on living. Her sons Eteocles and Polyneices are planning to battle each other for the throne of Thebes, and Jocasta has summoned Polyneices (who has arrived with an army from Argos) to come inside the walls and attempt negotiating with his brother. Jocasta's exit is followed by a second prologue in the form of a *teichoscopia* (88–201), or 'view from the walls,' involving Jocasta's daughter Antigone and her Tutor (*Paidagôgos*). This *teichoscopia* takes the form of an *epirrhematic amoibaion*, with the Tutor speaking iambic trimeters and Antigone singing in lyric meter. Antigone looks for the face of her brother, Polyneices, whom she has not seen for some time; the Tutor, who has arranged the truce between the armies, answers her questions about who is who in Polyneices' Argive host.

The dramatic context of the *teichoscopia* does not seem to warrant a lyric outburst.[39] If lyric in the woman's voice were simply about emotion, one would expect the effect of Antigone singing against the Tutor's trimeters to be a heightening of Antigone's alarm and fright as she sees the forces gathering around the city of Thebes. But is this in fact the case? Antigone only twice says anything suggestive of fear; first she asks about the security of the city, if the gates are fastened tightly with bars (114–116); second, she describes Hippomedon as *phoberos eisidein* ("fearful to look upon," 127), then goes on to describe him (with less horror) as *asterôpos hôs en graphaisin* ("star-like, as in a painting," 129). If anything, Antigone is disturbingly unafraid. As she asks for the identities of the warriors she sees, she accordingly poeticizes their movements and appearances. She sees the flowing hair of Parthenopaeus and his dazzling eyes (146–147); she says that her brother Polyneices flashes like the dawn rays of the sun (169). The gentleness with which Amphia-

[39] This scene has, of course, been suspected as non-Euripidean. See Mastronarde (1994), ad 168–173. But there is no reason to doubt its authenticity on the basis that it does not match Euripides' patterns of *amoibaia*; if anything, it is a delightful Euripidean innovation.

raus goads his colts reminds her of the moon-goddess: (175 ff.). Antigone gradually moves beyond any fear she might have had at the beginning of the scene to the point where she addresses some of the Seven with threats of her own. She wishes that Artemis would kill Parthenopaeus on the mountains with his mother (151–153); and her last stanza (181 ff.) is devoted to Capaneus, whose boasts of giving captive Theban women to Mycenae she deliberately repeats and even mocks by praying to Nemesis and Zeus to remember that it is in their power to lay his pride to rest.

How would the *teichoscopia* have been any different if Euripides had written both parts in trimeter? If Antigone had spoken instead of sung, she would not have been the focus of the scene. Coming as it does at the beginning of the play, the *teichoscopia* introduces two characters with intimate involvement in the household that Jocasta had described in her prologue. Irrespective of meter, the words suggests that the Tutor has the potential to be as equally involved in the plot as Antigone. He is, after all, extremely knowledgeable of the particulars of the army and the identity of the Seven, since he himself was responsible for making truce terms between Eteocles and Polyneices (95–98). What lyric does, then, is highlight Antigone as the true focus of the scene. Though the Tutor's knowledge is important, it is relevant only in so far as it answers Antigone's specific questions and elicits certain responses from her. In particular, the audience's attention is drawn to her desire to see her brother after his long exile; as it is, she sees him only faintly in the distance:

ΑΝ. ποῦ δ' ὃς ἐμοὶ μιᾶς ἐγένετ' ἐκ ματρὸς
πολυπόνῳ μοίρᾳ;
ὦ φίλτατ', εἰπέ, ποῦ 'στι Πολυνείκης, γέρον;
ΠΑ. ἐκεῖνος ἑπτὰ παρθένων τάφου πέλας
Νιόβης Ἀδράστῳ πλησίον παραστατεῖ.
ὁρᾷς; ΑΝ. ὁρῶ δῆτ' οὐ σαφῶς, ὁρῶ δέ πως
μορφῆς τύπωμα στέρνα τ' ἐξεικασμένα.
ἀνεμώκεος εἴθε δρόμον νεφέλας
ποσὶν ἐξανύσαιμι δι' αἰθέρος
πρὸς ἐμὸν ὁμογενέτορα, περὶ δ' ὠλένας
δέρᾳ φιλτάτᾳ βάλοιμεν χρόνῳ,
φυγάδα μέλεον. ὡς
ὅπλοισι χρυσέοισιν ἐκπρεπής, γέρον,
ἑῴοις ὅμοια φλεγέθων βολαῖς.

ANTIGONE: (singing) *Where is he, who was born from the same mother as me*
to a painful fate?
Oh dearest old man, tell me, where is Polyneices?

TUTOR: That's him; he stands by the tomb of the seven daughters
of Niobe, close to Adrastus.
Do you see? ANTIGONE: Indeed I see, not clearly, but somewhat I see
the outline of his shape and his chest portrayed.
Would that I could finish with my feet
the running-course of a wind-swift cloud through the air
towards my own dear brother, and throw my arms
around his dearest neck at last,
the miserable exile! How
distinguished he is in his golden weapons, old man,
blazing just like the rays of dawn. *Phoenician Women* 156–169

Shirley Barlow's reading suggests that Antigone "sees the whole thing as a great romance, with Polyneices as its hero."[40] This creates the expectation of some kind of reunion scene later in the play, and also allows Euripides to dash those expectations. As it turns out, Antigone's only reunion in this play is with her father (another one of Euripides' surprises in his revision of the myth), and it is a reunion in exile. What brings Antigone to the walls of Thebes is her curiosity, and it is that very motive which the use of lyric intensifies. The fact that Antigone can react to the army only with poetic elation says much about the immaturity and innocence of her character, traits which will sadly vanish by the end of the play. Antigone *should* be frightened by the sight of the enemy army, especially when the Tutor informs her the enemy has *dikê* on their side (154). The use of lyric (as opposed to trimeter) is indicative, then, of her youthful incapacity to recognize the approaching forces for the disaster they are.[41]

Men's Song

So far this discussion has been limited to female lyric, primarily because the bulk of lyric in Euripides is in the female voice. But even if the proportions were different, lyric accomplishes specific things for women which it does not accomplish for men: memory, knowledge, resistance, transition, and interrogation. For Euripidean men, in contrast, singing

[40] Barlow (1971), 60.

[41] Mastronarde (1994), 552 also discusses Antigone's childlike emotions and their reversal by the end of the play; and Scodel (1997), 87 suggests that "Antigone's childishness in the *teichoscopia* may be the result not only of her status as a protected maiden, however, but of the situation itself: the spectacle is too powerful to allow the spectator to try to understand it."

appears to be related to a kind of 'demasculinization,' often accompanying a sudden loss or lack of power. Even for women, lyric almost always suggests a certain powerlessness; people wouldn't sing if they could order persons around.

Some scholars have argued that the 'demasculinizing' contexts in which Euripidean men resort to song are also 'feminizing.' Monica Cyrino says of *Phoenician Women* that:

> Euripides represents the grief of Oedipus as an essentially feminine experience, by allowing him the lyric expression normally reserved for the female character in the actors' duet. [...] Therefore, while Oedipus and Antigone can be equated in suffering by their lyric song, Oedipus is simultaneously located as an exceptionally powerless, even feminized, male figure.[42]

Froma Zeitlin's inclusion of the 'pain of the body' as part of the cultural definition of the 'feminine' suggests that many men's songs occur at moments of intense physical pain, which metaphorically brings men close to the childbirth pains of women.[43] Examples would include the blinded Polymestor at *Hecuba* 1056–1108, the blinded Oedipus who sings an *amoibaion* with the chorus at Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* 1307–1368, the dying Hippolytus at *Hippolytus* 1347–1388, and the dying Heracles at Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* 983–1043. Edith Hall argued that the singing Xerxes in Aeschylus' *Persians* is undoubtedly effeminized, not least because he is described as "given to wail (*kôkuein*) in a shrill manner designated by the term *oxu*—that is, lamenting in a high-pitched voice appropriate to a woman."[44] Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz wrote, "To suffer is to suffer like a woman (his [Heracles'] death pangs are like birth pangs), for to be weak is to be womanish (compare Kreon, and the piteousness of Agamemnon's murder by a woman in the *Oresteia*)."[45] However, whereas these comments might hold true for various plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, one should avoid assigning 'femininity' as the default synonym for 'unmasculinity' in Euripidean lyric contexts because when Euripidean women resort to song, they are rarely characterized by lack of control, weakness, or physical pain. Therefore these characteristics are not essentially 'feminine' themselves in Euripides' lyrics, because they do not occur with female singers.

[42] Cyrino (1998), 23–24.
[43] Zeitlin (1985a).
[44] Hall (1999), 117.
[45] Rabinowitz (1992), 45. Compare also Loraux (1981), 37–87 for a discussion of Heracles' 'feminine' death in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*.

These are, however, 'unmasculine' characteristics. A singing man need not become more like a woman; if anything, he might lose gender altogether.

Even so, there appear to have been some social attitudes in Euripides' day that equated men's singing, in certain contexts, with weakness and effeminacy. Cyrino has cited fragments of Quintus Curtius' lost book on the early life of Alexander as evidence for a general aversion to men's singing in the fourth century:

> After he was asked by his father Philip whether he was not ashamed to sing so beautifully, Alexander never sang again, as if acknowledging his father's opinion that the practice was not suitable for him as a man, a warrior, and the heir to the Macedonian throne.[46]

Similarly, Eric Csapo collected ancient sources that hint at the 'unmasculine' influence of New Music, with which Euripides himself was associated. These include Aristophanes' *Clouds* 966–972 (the Greater argument speaking of musical education), Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, Plutarch's *Convivial Questions*, and Pseudo-Plutarch's *De Musica*. These ancient sources all criticize New Music for being soft, effeminate, loose, slack, and capable of inspiring men to buggery.[47] These same critiques were brought forward by Euripides himself in his *Antiope* (now fragmentary) in a debate between Zethus and Amphion. In arguing for the active life against the contemplative life, Zethus decidedly chastises Amphion for singing on his lyre and adopting "a womanish shape" (*gynaikomimon morphôma*):

    ἀμελεῖς ὧν ⟨σε φροντίζειν ἐχρῆν·⟩
ψυχῆς φύσιν ⟨γὰρ⟩ ὧδε γενναίαν ⟨λαχὼν⟩
γυναικομίμῳ διαπρέπεις μορφώματι
κοὔτ᾽ ἂν δίκης βουλαῖσι προσθεῖ᾽ ἂν λόγον,
οὔτ᾽ εἰκὸς ἂν καὶ πιθανὸν ⟨οὐδὲν⟩ ἂν λάκοις
    κοὔτ᾽ ἂν ἀσπίδος κύτει
⟨καλῶς⟩ ὁμιλήσειας οὔτ᾽ ἄλλων ὕπερ
νεανικὸν βούλευμα βουλεύσαιό ⟨τι⟩

ZETHUS: You are careless of what ⟨you should care for,⟩
⟨For⟩ you have conspicuously ⟨twisted⟩ the noble nature of your soul
In a womanish shape,
Nor could you make a speech correctly to the court,
Nor could you seize anything likely and persuasive,
    nor with the hollow of a shield

[46] Cyrino (1998), 1.
[47] Csapo and Slater (1995), 331–347; cf. also Csapo (2000).

> Could you fight ⟨well⟩ in battle, nor could you
> Propose any fine resolution to help another. *Antiope*, frag. 9 Kambitsis

Zethus further equates Amphion's singing with laziness and uselessness to friends. The chief fragments of *Antiope* are:

> You begin evils if you introduce this Muse that is lazy, wine-loving, careless about money. (Fragment 7 Kambitsis)

> A man who has won an honest livelihood but by carelessness loses the things at home, and because he has pleasure in singing always hunts for this, will be lazy in his house and in the state, and to his friends he will be nothing. For nature is gone if a man yields to sweet pleasure. (Fragment 8 Kambitsis)

> But follow me: Stop being a fool and practice the music of hard work; sing of such things as these, and you will show that you are reasonable: digging, plowing, watching the herds; leave to others these dainty artifices as a result of which you will dwell in empty houses. (Fragment 10 Kambitsis)

Amphion apparently did have a lyric moment earlier in the play (*Aithera kai Gaian pantôn geneteiran aeidô*, "I sing of Sky and Earth the mother of all things," frag. 6 Kambitsis), but whereas that song was in praise of earth and sky, the songs that Zethus criticizes are those that are wine-loving, lazy, and too full of pleasure, such as one might sing at a symposium.[48] Because singing was an unseemly activity for men of authority, some have argued, it was therefore undesirable to represent singing males on the tragic stage, and so female characters sing more often. This argument has some flaws; obviously song *per se* was not effeminate in the Greek mind, but rather the context in which one sings. Festivals and other rituals that called for communal singing by men, or singing at an all-male symposium, surely did not make the singers less manly; if anything, singing in such contexts would have reinforced masculine homosocial behavior. The songs Zethus appears to condemn in *Antiope* are songs of pleasure; it is not clear, however, to what extent this condemnation was actually resolved in the play itself. The argument between the two brothers certainly must have been resolved somehow, since they work in concert during the latter half of the play in killing Dirce and attempting to kill Lycus. As for the final word on the value of singing, Hermes *ex machina* commands Amphion to pick up his lyre and celebrate the gods in song in order to cast a spell on the rocks

[48] For a fuller discussion of this lost scene, see Snell (1964), chapter 4, entitled "*Vita Activa* and *Vita Contemplativa* in Euripides' *Antiope*."

and trees which will move of their own accord to build the walls of Thebes. Song is put to good use in the end. But even given this scenario, it is noteworthy that songs of pleasure, such as Zethus describes, are generally *not* the subject of Euripidean men's lyric. It may be no accident, then, that men who sing are often not the title roles or protagonists of their plays (e.g., the Phrygian slave in *Orestes*, or Polymestor in *Hecuba*, or Amphitryon in *Heracles)*. Furthermore, no adult male non-barbarian character in Euripides has a monody longer than 45 lines, whereas quite a few adult female characters in Euripides (Hecuba, Creusa, Jocasta, Electra) have monodies exceeding 50 lines.[49] In this respect Euripides' surviving plays differ sharply from those of Sophocles, which include long monodies for male Greek heroes in tribulation (Ajax, Heracles, Philoctetes).[50] Interestingly, lyric is not used by Euripides for male madness; Orestes in *Orestes* goes crazy in trimeters.

Euripidean men who resort to song do so because they lose the power and authority which define masculinity in any given dramatic context. For instance, the Phrygian male slave in *Orestes* who rushes out of the palace and relates to the chorus women how Orestes and Pylades have just murdered Helen, does so in lyric. This slave lacks any power in the situation, being neither Greek nor noble, and having just witnessed his mistress murdered. Orestes himself arrives on the scene and describes the slave as "neither man nor woman" (1528), and enjoys

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[49] Based on the definition of "monody" by Barner (1971), the dying Hippolytus' monody of 42 lines (23 lines of chanted anapests, 19 lines of lyric anapests) is the longest in extant Euripides for an adult male non-barbarian character. The shortest is Peleus' strophic lament at *Andromache* 1173–1183, 1186–1196 (22 lines). Longer male monodies are given to barbarians and youths. Polymestor of *Hecuba* 1056–1084, 1088–1106 is a Thracian barbarian whose dochmiac-laden monody lasts 48 lines; Ion is an adolescent boy, whose monody lasts 102 lines; the genderless Phrygian of *Orestes* sings a monody (with occasional interruptions by the chorus) of 127 lines (*Orestes* 1369–1379, 1381–1392, 1395–1424, 1426–1451, 1453–1472, 1474–1501). Among women's monodies, Hecuba in *Hecuba* 59–97 and 154–176 sings in anapests for 62 lines; Hecuba in *Trojan Women* 98–152 and 278–291 sings for 69 lines; Electra's monody at *Electra* 122–166 lasts 55 lines; Jocasta's monody at *Phoenician Women* 301–354 lasts 54 lines; Creusa's monody at *Ion* 859–922 lasts 64 lines; in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Iphigenia's first monody (1279–1335) lasts 57 lines. As stated in Chapter 2, women in Euripides spend a tremendous amount of time singing.

[50] Once again based on the definition of "monody" by Barner (1971), *Ajax* 394–427 is Ajax's strophic monody (with choral rejoinder) in which he sings 32 lines. At *Women of Trachis* 983–987, 993–1016, 1023–1043, Heracles' strophic song of pain gives him 50 sung lines. Philoctetes' pitiable strophic monody lamenting the theft of his bow, at *Philoctetes* 1081–1094, 1101–1115, 1123–1139, 1146–1162 gives him 63 sung lines. Battezzato (2005b), 156 discusses Sophocles' assignment of lyrics to his male protagonists as a surprising innovation.

teasing the slave with imminent death. Similarly, Polymestor in *Hecuba* sings as he rushes out from the tent where he has been blinded by the Trojan women. Groping for the women who first murdered his sons and then stabbed out his eyes, Polymestor has been reduced to powerlessness.

Grief at the sudden loss of a loved one can cause a man to break into lyrics. In *Hippolytus*, Theseus arrives home at the very moment that his wife Phaedra has committed suicide, and breaks into lyrics upon seeing her body.[51] At *Heracles* 1178–1202, Amphitryon and Theseus share an *epirrhematic amoibaion*. The male singer (Amphitryon) is not the protagonist of the action; rather, his son, Heracles, is the hero whose madness and murder of his family are the subject of the drama. As the *amoibaion* begins, Heracles is sitting silently in a corner, covering his head to prevent his pollution from spreading to Theseus, whom he had seen approaching in the distance. Theseus has come to offer military assistance to defeat the tyrant Lycus, which had been the plot of the first half of the play. What he sees instead are the corpses of Heracles' wife and sons. Amphitryon sings in enoplian dochmiacs while Theseus responds in iambic trimeters.

ΑΜ. ὦ τὸν ἐλαιοφόρον ὄχθον ἔχων ⟨ἄναξ⟩
ΘΗ. τί χρῆμά μ᾽ οἰκτροῖς ἐκάλεσας προοιμίοις;
ΑΜ. ἐπάθομεν πάθεα μέλεα πρὸς θεῶν.
ΘΗ. οἱ παῖδες οἵδε τίνος ἐφ᾽ οἷς δακρυρροεῖς;
ΑΜ. ἔτεκε μέν ⟨νιν⟩ οὑμὸς ἶνις τάλας,
τεκόμενος δ᾽ ἔκανε φόνιον αἷμα τλάς. 1184
ΘΗ. τί φῄς; τί δράσας; ΑΜ. μαινομένῳ πιτύλῳ πλαγχθεὶς 1187
ἑκατογκεφάλου βαφαῖς ὕδρας. 1188

AMPHITRYON: (singing) *Oh lord holding the olive-bearing hill—*
THESEUS: Why did you call on me with pitiable prelude?
AMPHITRYON: *We have suffered terrible sufferings from the gods.*
THESEUS: These children here—whose are they?—over whom you shed tears?
AMPHITRYON: *My miserable offspring begot them,*
and their begetter killed them, enduring the taint of their blood.
THESEUS: What are you saying? Why/how did he do it?
AMPHITRYON: *Struck by an impulse of madness,*
with arrows dipped in (the blood of) the hundred-headed hydra.

Heracles 1178–1184, 1187–1188

[51] The meter of this lyric moment is unique in its alternation between sung lyric and spoken iambic trimeters, as if Theseus is shifting between moments of lucidity and moments of heightened excitement.

This is not the first time that Amphitryon sings in this play. Earlier, in the so-called 'sleeping scene' (1042–1087), Amphitryon sang a duet with the chorus men, trying to prevent them from waking up Heracles, who had exhausted himself with killing everyone in his family during his mad fit. In both scenes, singing represents not only this old man's own lack of power as a father, but also the lack of order in the whole situation. By giving Theseus iambics against Amphitryon's lyrics, Euripides hints that Theseus will be the one to restore order and purify Heracles of his crime. Interestingly (as Wilamowitz observed), the first thing Theseus notices about Amphitryon is the sound of his singing, his "pitiable prelude" (*oiktrois prooimiois*, 1179); that is, Theseus would have no cause to consider the content of Amphitryon's address "pitiable" unless accompanied by sad music and/or sung in a distressing voice.

In *Ion*, the 'demasculinizing' effect of lyric found elsewhere underscores Ion's immaturity. The singer Ion is a boy who has not yet become a man. His opening monody (82–183) has the form of a hymn, which is matched by the verbal context. Ion is sweeping the temple of Phoebus Apollo at Delphi and praising the god for having nurtured him in this temple since he was a child. The audience has already learned from the prologue (delivered by Hermes) that Ion is really Apollo's illegitimate son. Ion's entrance, then, is one of delightful innocence, for even without knowing the truth, he has a unique bond with the god. He sings:

> Φοῖβός μοι γενέτωρ πατήρ·
> τὸν βόσκοντα γὰρ εὐλογῶ,
> τὸν δ' ὠφέλιμον ἐμοὶ πατέρος ὄνομα λέγω
> Φοῖβον τὸν κατὰ ναόν.

> ION: (singing) *Phoebus is the father who begot me.*
> *I speak in praise of him who nurtures me,*
> *and I call by the name of father my benefactor,*
> *Phoebus, god of the temple.* — *Ion* 136–140

This childlike innocence becomes even more lighthearted in the last portion of his song (144–183) when Ion meticulously shoots at the birds who have flocked around the temple and might build nests in the eaves or foul the offerings with their droppings. Unlike most of Euripides' heroines, the male Ion is not a victim at the start of this play. He is not in exile, or in slavery, or dying. His song is not an outburst that serves as a transition to some significant action, nor is he steeped in memory of a past personal experience. Instead, the effect of the lyrics are very much like those of Antigone in *Phoenician Women* (who does

not appreciate the danger of the spectacle she sees), or indeed like the strophic song of Alcestis' boy at *Alcestis* 393–415, whose sense of loss at his mother's death is all the more poignant because of his youth and his simple understanding of death (he sings, μαῖα δὴ κάτω / βέβακεν, οὐκέτ' ἔστιν, "Mother has gone down below, she is no more," *Alcestis* 393–394). Ion's innocence and youthful naiveté are likewise the essence of his song. By the end of the play, an attempt will be made on his life by his own mother, but he will be reunited with her and leave the temple of Apollo for a new and more illustrious future in the royal house of Athens. Yet in the opening lyric moment, Euripides presents us with a boy whose greatest worry in the world is to shoo away messy birds.

Agamemnon's lyric anapests in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (117–162) are very difficult to explain, and in fact have led some editors to doubt their authenticity.[52] Agamemnon is changing his mind about luring his daughter to Aulis and is advising the Old Man about what to say to Clytemnestra to prevent the women's arrival. The scene is certainly full of tension as Agamemnon hems and haws about explaining his decision, then gives the Old Man specific (and one might say overly elaborate) directions on how to reach Argos most quickly. Agamemnon appears to be losing control over the situation by his own indecision, and in this he could be described as 'unmasculine.' In fact, the successive scenes continue to exploit Agamemnon's poor abilities as a schemer, for Menelaus comes to argue with him, then Agamemnon changes his mind, and Menelaus changes his, and it is all for no avail because the women arrive. There is tension in all of this: but there does not seem to be any particular reason why Agamemnon should sing during his conversation with the Old Man, and not at other places. If the lines are indeed by Euripides (and one should not discount them simply on the grounds of their being sung), it is further proof of Euripides' innovative skill (especially at the latest point of his career) at bringing music into the realm of the actors.[53]

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[52] Diggle (1994a) marked all the anapests as being "vix Euripidei." Alternatively, Irigoin (1988) has supported the authenticity of the anapests based on their metrical and numerical similarity to the *parodos*.

[53] Aeschylus and Sophocles assign lyric anapests to their male characters in situations of greater crisis. At Aeschylus' *Persians* 908ff., Xerxes begins a lamentation with anapests. When the dying Heracles is brought on stage at *Women of Trachis* 971ff., he sings anapests while Hyllus and the Old Man recite theirs; Heracles then embarks on a strophic monody. A similar thing happens with the blinded Oedipus and the chorus at *Oedipus the King* 1297–1311.

Summary

This chapter has focused primarily on *epirrhematic amoibaia* and a couple of *parodoi* in the form of lyric dialogues. It would be impractical to discuss *all* lyric moments in extant Euripides, so some famous female solo arias, e.g., Creusa's monody at *Ion* 859–922 and Jocasta's at *Phoenician Women* 301–354, have been left out. But these and others can easily be fit into the new paradigm suggested here: that female song is more than just excited emotion, but indeed *communicates* important information and says much about the singer that is its source—much more than could be expressed in mere iambic trimeters.

The lyric moment in tragedy is an aural focalizer that invites the theater audience to see through the singer's eyes. It is a register of high feeling or intensity; after scenes of trimeter dialogue, lyric sounded strikingly different with its highly stylized vocabulary, unnatural grammatical syntax, and capacity for extensive metrical innovation. Lyric provides an extra-rational connection to what is absent or invisible, whether this is memory or fantasy or something supernatural or divine. Finally, lyric usually denotes the singer's lack of power; a singer would not sing if she had the opportunity to give commands.

Throughout this study, I have distanced myself from the familiar paradigm of 'emotional' vs. 'rational.' Far too often, scholars have explained women's song as excessive emotion and stopped there. This may be because the paradigm works to some extent in Sophocles' *Electra*, and ever since Aristotle, Sophocles has been seen as the norm for tragic rules. But what does a Euripidean woman communicate when she sings? Why does the Euripidean singer need to be aurally highlighted in any given context? And how do Euripidean men's songs differ in what they communicate and when they occur? The answers to these questions should now be clear. The semantics of women's song as communication are rich. Hecuba and Andromache in their name plays are aurally highlighted because their songs signal a change in the plot so that their characters will emerge from misfortune and take control. Alcestis, Electra, Hermione and Hypsipyle express the ownership of their sufferings and refuse to be distracted from their own vision of the world; this resistance takes the form of song. By singing and refusing to be interrupted from singing, these women individualize themselves for their stage audience and the theater audience. Women in recognition scenes reveal vital information to an avid male listener, whether it is Helen's self-defense of her chastity, Creusa's oath that

Apollo is Ion's father, Iphigenia's explanation of the (non-) sacrifice at Aulis, or Hypsipyle's life after her separation from her sons. In all these cases, song becomes the voice of the woman's body and its misuse in the past. The truth-telling power of lyric convinces the male listener of the veracity of the woman's past experiences, a fact which must be resolved before the 'rescue' can proceed. Women also ask questions in lyric (Hypsipyle, Hecuba in *Trojan Women*, Antigone) when their responses to new information is more important than the information itself. Contrarily, men's song does not afford them these channels of expression. Instead men's song indicates a crisis or condition that is potentially 'demasculinizing' for them, whether it be physical pain, grief, indecision, or immaturity.

CHAPTER FOUR

SILENCE I: GENDERED CATEGORIES

Of all the acts of speech in Greek tragedy one could discuss, silence might seem a surprising choice because *prima facie* it would appear that speech is not actually involved. However, the semantics of silence (σιωπή and σιγή) are so varied in tragedy that 'silence' often involves communication.[1] As Ernst Vogt expressed it so elegantly, it is paradoxically a "speaking silence."[2] Admittedly, tragedy does make good use of mute characters who never speak and are only addressed or referred to. There are also silent pauses and deliberate withdrawals from contact throughout the tragic corpus. However, 'silence' can also signify many different actions that do involve speech. In the words of Silvia Montiglio in her lengthy study of silence in Greek literature (including tragedy):

> Silence is never neutral in the land of logos. […] Emphasizing verbally an act of silence is a pervasive pattern in Greek literature. To speak of one's silence means to perform an act of silence: to "do silence."[3]

'Silence' can mean the concealment of personal secrets, so that some characters discuss at length their 'not-talking' about themselves, thereby creating a tension whether private stories will be revealed or not, and to whose disadvantage. Furthermore, many choruses swear to keep silent about an intrigue; at times they maintain this 'silence' not by refusing to talk, but by disseminating misinformation.

Euripides' peculiar interest in gender is particularly apparent in the way he reserves specific types of silences for his female characters, his male characters, and characters of both sexes. Silence accomplishes dif-

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[1] There are, of course, other words for 'silence.' See Susanne Gödde (2004) for a study of *euphêmia*. Focusing on select passages from Homer, Plato, and the tragedians, she argues that *euphêmia* is never a complete silence, but always implies powerful speech, thus accentuating the performative impetus of religious speech. She touches briefly on the Euripidean plays *Ion* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and is not concerned with the topic of gender.

[2] Vogt (2001), 18: "…es ist, um es mit einem Paradox zu sagen, ein *sprechendes* Schweigen."

[3] Montiglio (2000), 289.

ferent goals for Euripidean women than it does for men. Just as lyric (discussed in the previous chapters) provides Euripidean women with a wide semantic range of expression not available to men, likewise certain categories of silence (and their dramatic implications) are gender-exclusive. For some Euripidean men, silence is a deliberate withholding of speech until the appropriate time, which can be determined by the speaker's status or his on-stage audience. These selective silences serve as preludes to persuasive speeches in which new information is relayed. This kind of silence is significantly not used by Euripidean women, despite the real-life ancient social expectation that Athenian women remain silent; instead, song appears to be the more appropriate mode for Euripidean women to reveal personal information, especially to persuade a male listener.

Furthermore, silence for some Euripidean women involves the keeping of secrets. Female choruses who keep silent are motivated by female solidarity, and their oaths sometimes require them to resort to lies to hide what they know but cannot reveal. Some particularly Euripidean features include women's concern for their reputation among other women, and the omnipresence of female solidarity, even when the revealing of personal secrets might be expected to elicit female gossip that could exercise social control. Female silence, then, is complicated by Greek cultural assumptions about women's social roles as they operate even in the fictional world of myth. Whenever a female character exercises *sigê* in Euripides, the dynamics of that *sigê* are specific: female silence operates against the backgrounds of the 'idealized' silence of women and the power of women's gossip, yet raises the expectations of the revealing of personal secrets with the assurance of the protection of female solidarity.[4]

Many studies of silence in Greek tragedy have focused on 'significant' or 'dramatic' silences. There are several moments in drama when a character's pause is made apparent in the text when another character or the chorus mentions it. It is essential that the text refer to the silence, for without written confirmation, the pause cannot be assumed

[4] Montiglio discusses many of these same instances of female secret keeping and solidarity (2000: 199–200, 233–238, 252–256), and she and I have independently come to similar conclusions. But her interest is in silence as thematic throughout Greek literature, and she often discusses tragedy with the assumption that all three playwrights used the same conventions of gender; I, however, am arguing for specifically Euripidean representations of gender through sex-specific uses of silence.

to exist.[5] There seem to be two very basic significations of this type of silence, the first involving those characters who have nothing to say (e.g., if they are in shock), and the second those who do not speak when they could speak.[6] The other common focus of studies on silence in drama is the mute character, or *kôphon prosôpon*. Unnamed slaves, attendants, and children are the most common mutes, though often there is a character with a name.[7] These mute roles give the audience essentially no information about themselves and make no responses to the dialogues which ensue.

However, there are two other semantic categories of silence in Euripides, and these appear to be gender-specific. These are what can be dubbed the 'partial muteness' of men (in Eur. *Suppliant Women, Phoenician Women*, and *Orestes)*; and 'silence as secret-keeping' as a plot device used by Euripidean women (especially in *Ion, Hippolytus*, and *Helen)* and by female choruses (*Medea, Hippolytus, Ion, Iphigenia in Tauris, Iphigenia in Aulis*). These are certainly not the only types of silence in Euripidean tragedy, but they are in themselves remarkable examples of Euripides' construction of gender. The partial muteness of men and the 'silence' of

[5] The definitive works on this subject are Oliver Taplin (1978) and Donald Mastronarde (1979).

[6] An example of the former type is Creon's silent pause at *Phoenician Women* 960 after learning that his son Menoeceus must be sacrificed. In his shock at Teiresias' prophecy, Creon is dumb, and the chorus ask, τί σιγᾷς γῆρυν ἄφθογγον σχάσας; ("Why are you silent, having let your voice go speechless?") The latter and more deliberate type of silence can be indicative of defiance, e.g., Theseus' angry refusal to speak to Hippolytus, which the young boy notices at *Hippolytus* 911, σιγᾷς; σιωπῆς δ' οὐδὲν ἔργον ἐν κακοῖς ("You are silent? But there is no use for silence in misfortunes"), or shame, e.g., Heracles' veiling of himself after killing his children, and his reluctance to answer Theseus in *Heracles*. This "refusal to make contact," as Mastronarde called it, is not solely a male phenomenon in Euripides; Hecuba is uncertain how to approach Agamemnon at *Hecuba* 739–740, and debates whether to maintain her silence. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Agamemnon asks his daughter (who has just learned that she is to be sacrificed) why she is averting her eyes, staring at the ground, and not speaking; he never does receive a response from her (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 1123). For an Aeschlyean example, see Mossman's (2005: 355) discussion of Cassandra's refusal to answer Clytemnestra at *Agamemnon* 1039 as "not the silence of helplessness, but the silence of power——the power which knowledge gives her."

[7] Cf. the captive Iole in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. Euripides presents pairs of men who travel together, one of whom is mute, e.g., Orestes and the mute Pylades in Euripides' *Electra*, and Acamas, who in *Children of Heracles* comes with his brother Demophon, king of Athens, to the aid of the suppliant Iolaus. In the fragmentary *Hypsipyle*, one of the twin brothers reunited with their mother is mute; and at the end of *Electra* and *Helen*, the Dioscuri appear as a pair *ex machina*, but only Castor speaks. As part of an associated pair, perhaps the presence of the mute role was expected at the side of his speaking partner.

women are sex-exclusive phenomena in Euripides; and while both male and female characters are capable of keeping secrets through silence, the characteristics of these silences are distinctly different between the sexes.[8]

Partial Muteness of Men

There is a phenomenon in tragedy that can be called 'partial muteness.' This describes the actor who does not speak for several lines after his initial entrance, leading the audience to wonder whether his character is one of the many mutes. This phenomenon has been called 'Aeschylean silence,' based on the description in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 911–915 of several of Aeschylus' plays (now lost) which involved characters like Niobe and Achilles who were present on stage, immobile and silent, for a long time before actually speaking and joining the plot.[9] The dramatic effect was presumably the teasing of the audience's expectations about when the character would break his silence, for whom, and what type of action might follow. This 'Aeschylean' form has its Euripidean equivalent, and in all three cases, the characters are male. Adrastus in *Suppliant Women* and Orestes in his name play appear in tableau at the prologue, but do not speak until shortly after the first episode.[10] In both plays, the prologues are spoken by women. In a sim-

[8] Montiglio (2000: 224–227) argues for another male-exclusive use of silence in tragedy: that of tragic heroes, whereby silence heralds "pain that cannot be told but only cried out." Because her examples are all Sophoclean (Philoctetes, Heracles in *Women of Trachis*, and Ajax), they will not be discussed here.

[9] See Taplin (1972). Taplin's main conclusion was that in none of Aeschylus' extant plays do the silences that have been coined 'Aeschylean' actually appear; not even the Cassandra scene from *Agamemnon* (which would seem to be the most obvious) would count as an example. Whether Taplin is correct or not, the Euripidean equivalent of these silences is much like the Cassandra scene; a character comes on stage for the first time, is silent (and sometimes ignored) for a long time, and suddenly speaks. See Ernst Vogt (2001) for a reappraisal of Aeschylus' most famous "Schweigeszenen," those of Cassandra, Niobe, and Achilles.

[10] In a similar type of silence, a character is present during the prologue, but is silent only until the initial prologue speaker has finished acquainting the audience with the story. Such is the case with Megara in the *Heracles*, and the prostrate Hecuba in *Trojan Women* (though interestingly, Hecuba is presumably unaware of the divine prologue). However, these are not deliberate silences, but rather a necessary element of Euripides' stage convention for prologue speeches. Walter Stockert (2004) in his study of silence in Euripides developed his own typology of silence: 'der aischyleische Typus' (e.g., Heracles at *Heracles* 1160ff.), 'das Schweigen der Verachtung' (e.g., Theseus' refusal to speak to Hippolytus), 'das Schweigen der Scham' (similar to my discussion of women's

ilar fashion, Menoeceus in *Phoenician Women* enters for the first time in mid-play, but remains silent for over a hundred lines.

These examples of partial muteness of men have a common feature that one might call 'selective timing.' These men wait their turn to speak. Adrastus in *Suppliant Women* is silent until addressed by a man, Theseus; Menoeceus in *Phoenician Women* does not speak until he is alone with his father; Orestes in his name play is asleep until after the *parodos*. As always in Euripides, gender makes a difference. Unlike the silences of women to be discussed later in this chapter, these men are not hiding personal secrets or deliberately withholding vital information concerning a plot. These men do have information to share, but it does not need to be expressed until Euripides has provided the proper 'moment.'[11]

a. *Adrastus in Euripides'* Suppliant Women

Euripides' *Suppliant Women* is a kind of sequel to Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, describing the aftermath of Polyneices' war against his homeland, Thebes, with the help of an Argive army under the leadership of his father-in-law, Adrastus. The plot revolves around the recovery of the bodies of the slain Argive soldiers, the eulogizing of their persons, and their proper burial (including a cremation of the warrior Capaneus, which gets spectacularly interrupted by his widow Evadne, who throws herself upon his burning pyre). The play begins in tableau at the temple of Demeter at Eleusis; a chorus of suppliants—the mothers of the Seven against Thebes, in fact—have taken refuge at this temple and are surrounding Aethra, mother of king Theseus of Athens. King Adrastus of Argos sits silent and veiled in the corner, in the company of a second chorus of young boys, the sons of the Seven.

Adrastus remains silent and covered until line 112, when he is directly addressed by Theseus. The effect of this silence is to highlight the female dialogue of the first scene. Unlike other suppliant dramas (*Chil-*

personal secrets, since his examples—Phaedra and Creusa—are the same as mine), 'brütende, unheilverkündende Schweigen' (Medea's ominous silence in her prologue), and the role of silence in scenes of self-sacrifice (Macaria in *Children of Heracles*, Polyxena in *Hecuba*, Menoeceus in *Phoenician Women*, and Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis).*

[11] This discussion is not concerned with the partial muteness of unnamed children (such as the boy in *Alcestis*) or of choruses (e.g., the chorus of orphaned boys in Eur. *Suppliant Women*, who are on stage in silence at the prologue, exit in mid-play, return again, and eventually sing with the chorus of mothers).

dren of Heracles, Heracles, Andromache) in which the suppliant (Iolaus, Amphitryon, Andromache) gives the prologue, in *Suppliant Women* it is the supplicated Aethra, Theseus' mother, who delivers it. She is the first to hear the plea of the suppliant mothers and—significantly—the first to communicate with Adrastus, although this happens just before the play begins:

> κοινὸν δὲ φόρτον ταῖσδ' ἔχων χρείας ἐμῆς
> Ἄδραστος ὄμμα δάκρυσιν τέγγων ὅδε
> κεῖται, τό τ' ἔγχος τήν τε δυστυχεστάτην
> στένων στρατείαν ἣν ἔπεμψεν ἐκ δόμων·
> ὅς μ' ἐξοτρύνει παῖδ' ἐμὸν πεῖσαι λιταῖς
> νεκρῶν κομιστὴν ἢ λόγοισιν ἢ δορὸς
> ῥώμῃ γενέσθαι καὶ τάφου μεταίτιον
>
> AETHRA: Sharing in common with these women the burden of need for me
> Adrastus, wetting his eye with tears,
> lies here, lamenting the sword and the ill-fated
> army which he sent forth from his home;
> he urges me to persuade my son with entreaties
> to become the one who recovers the corpses—either by negotiation or
> by force of arms—and to be partner in their burial…
>
> Eur. *Suppliant Women* 20–26

Aethra's prologue offers an unusual level of detail about actions that are represented as having taken place moments before the start of the play. She admits that Adrastus spoke to her and sought her help as an intermediary to the king, her son Theseus—not merely that she would send for him, but that she persuade Theseus with entreaties (*peisai litais*, 24) to rescue the bodies of the Seven. It is an indication that Adrastus recognizes the influence that she will indeed have on Theseus in the next scene.

Euripides could easily have dramatized Adrastus supplicating Aethra, but instead decides to have Aethra narrate it, and allow two others supplications to be dramatized: the chorus' *parados*, and Adrastus' appeal to Theseus. These two scenes involve same-sex communication: a chorus of mothers addressing Aethra, also a mother; and the king Adrastus supplicating the king Theseus. Yet the cross-gender communication (of Adrastus appealing to Aethra) is reported, not acted out. As a result, the opening scene (1–86) is a female space, resounding with the voices of women, namely Aethra and the chorus of mothers. But remarkably, Aethra herself suggests that women's speech alone is not efficacious. She sends for Theseus to come to the temple because, she says, it is wise for women always to get things done through men (40–41).

When Theseus arrives immediately after the *parodos* (87), Aethra informs him of the identity of the suppliant women as the mothers of the Seven against Thebes. It is then that Theseus notices Adrastus groaning in the corner:

ΘΗ. τίς δ' ὁ στενάζων οἰκτρὸν ἐν πύλαις ὅδε;
ΑΙ. Ἄδραστος, ὥς λέγουσιν, Ἀργείων ἄναξ.
ΘΗ. οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τόνδε παῖδες; ἦ τούτων τέκνα;
ΑΙ. οὔκ, ἀλλὰ νεκρῶν τῶν ὀλωλότων κόροι.
ΘΗ. τί γὰρ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἦλθον ἱκεσίᾳ χερί;
ΑΙ. οἶδ'· ἀλλὰ τῶνδε μῦθος οὑντεῦθεν, τέκνον.

THESEUS: And who is this man groaning pitifully at the (temple's) entrance?
AETHRA: Adrastus, so they say, the king of the Argives.
THESEUS: And the boys at his side—are they the sons of these people?
AETHRA: No, they are the sons of the dead men who died.
THESEUS: Why have they come to us with suppliant hand?
AETHRA: I know; but the tale from this point on is theirs, child.
Eur. *Suppliant Women* 104–109

Euripides' details sound odd. First Aethra says that the king in mourning is Adrastus, "so they say" (or even, "so these women say")—but surely Adrastus identified himself to Aethra when he spoke to her earlier, as she herself said? Perhaps the significant detail "so these women say" emphasizes the authority of women's voices that began the play. Then there is the surprising detail that Adrastus is surrounded by another chorus of young boys (106), our first textual clue to the full contingent of actors involved in the opening tableau. Once again, their verbal invisibility in the text up to this point reinforces the 'women-only' character of the opening scene.

Now Aethra compels Theseus to change the gender dynamics of communication. When asked why the suppliant women are here, Aethra at 109 replies that the remainder (*houentouthen*, "from this point on") of the tale (*mythos*) belongs to these people (the suppliant women), even though she said in her prologue that Adrastus had specifically urged her (*exotrunei*, 24) to entreat Theseus to rescue the bodies of the Seven. Aethra chooses not to explain any of it, and places the burden on the suppliant women to supply the *mythos* and speak for themselves. Yet Theseus, instead of addressing the women, turns to Adrastus as their male representative:

Θη. σὲ τὸν κατήρη χλανιδίοις ἀνιστορῶ.
λέγ' ἐκκαλύψας κρᾶτα καὶ πάρες γόον·
πέρας γὰρ οὐδὲν μὴ διὰ γλώσσης ἰόν.

THESEUS: You, muffled in woolen shawls—I question you.
Speak once you've unveiled your head, and leave off groaning.
There will be no successful end unless it travels through the tongue.
Eur. *Suppliant Women* 110–112

Theseus focuses on Adrastus' costume of covered head and woolen shawls that indicate his mourning status; but he also mentions Adrastus' tongue, a subtle comment on the fact that the actor has not uttered a sound on stage in this whole play. Adrastus finally breaks his silence (113), and in this male-to-male dialogue explains the sad history that led to the disastrous defeat of the Seven.

Unfortunately, Adrastus is an unconvincing speaker, and Theseus initially rejects his plea for help in recovering the bodies of the Seven. Adrastus' failure is not in his timing, but in Theseus' cross-examination which sets Adrastus up as the subject of a skewed inquiry—namely, was he the victim of undeserved misfortune or not? Adrastus' appeals to pity do not help his case, for Theseus' interrogation of Adrastus' apparent stupidity in disobeying oracles is not influenced by emotion. Daniel Mendelsohn in his analysis foregrounds Theseus' shock at learning that Adrastus had married his daughters to non-Argives, which amounts to foreigners (*xenoi*).[12] When Adrastus has failed utterly in convincing Theseus, the Argive mothers make their attempt at persuasion, first by appealing to Theseus' noble lineage with connections to Argos (263–267), and then appealing with raw emotion and physical contact (267–285). It is then that Aethra surprisingly begs:

εἴπω τι, τέκνον, σοί τε καὶ πόλει καλόν;

AETHRA: Son, might I speak something beneficial to you and to the city?
Eur. *Suppliant Women* 293

Aethra is apologizing for speaking at all.[13] Although she is out of place, she is not out of turn. Ironically, she herself had suggested that it is best to get things done through men; but since that mode of debate—man speaking with man—has come to no positive conclusion, it is her turn to take matters into her own hands. In the course of her *rhesis*, Aethra convinces Theseus that the rescue of the bodies of the Seven would actually be a good and noble thing for Athens. Thus Aethra—the very woman who said earlier that women should get things done

[12] Mendelsohn (2002), 152–161.

[13] For a discussion of women's apologies for speaking in male space, see Chapter 6 in this book, "Women Out of Place."

through men—proves the exact opposite: that at times women are better informed or have better knowledge of what is the wisest course of action.

Mendelsohn argues that Adrastus is 'feminized' at the start of *Suppliant Women*, both by his marginal position and his costume which veils him, and by the resemblance of these qualities to the sorrowful mother Demeter at whose shrine the play takes place, specifically Demeter's description in the Homeric Hymn. With regard to Adrastus' silence, Mendelsohn writes:

> As one who now prefers the darkness of a hidden interior to the light of day, and who has eschewed intelligible speech for incoherent lamentation, Adrastos would surely have resembled the Argive women around him, to whose grey old age he indeed compares his own.[14]

Yet I would argue that Adrastus' silence actually reinforces his masculinity by disassociating him from a female dialogue; he speaks only with another man (Theseus), just as Aethra speaks only with women or with her son. Euripides deliberately does not stage his conversation with Aethra (even though she reports it, so an audience knows it happened). What an audience does witness of his silence gives an immediate shape to his character; as a suppliant who represents a chorus of women, he is willing to observe all the social proprieties of who may speak with whom, and who represents authority. Ironically, at the start of this play it is male dialogue which fails, and female verbal intervention which succeeds. In typical Euripidean contradiction, the rules governing women's idealized silence in public—the social convention—is contrasted with what is actually effective; but Aethra's intervention is successful only after the correct behavior of men addressing men has failed.

b. *Orestes in* Orestes

Orestes opens with the inventive tableau of the title character lying on a bed center stage with his sister Electra tending to him. For the first 211 lines of the play, which include the two-part prologue and the *parodos*, Orestes is silent and motionless; like Adrastus in *Suppliant Women*, this allows for the opening moments of the play to resound with the voices of women. In her opening speech, Electra points to

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[14] Mendelsohn (2002), 151.

her sleeping brother, collapsed on his bed (35), then narrates the particulars of this drama: six days have passed since she and Orestes murdered their mother Clytemnestra, and in all that time Orestes had been maddened by his mother's Furies. The people of Argos have decreed (*edoxe Argei*, 46) that no one should receive the matricides into their houses or speak to them, thereby treating them as exiles within the city; furthermore the Argives will vote this very day whether to stone them to death (49–50). Electra and Orestes' uncle Menelaus has arrived home from Troy and might come to their aid, and in any case has sent Helen to the Argive palace ahead of time, with their daughter Hermione (53ff.). Helen herself comes on stage at line 71, worried that the Argives hate her, but anxious to make an offering at her sister Clytemnestra's grave. When Electra convinces Helen that Hermione can perform the offering, Helen calls Hermione (at this point a mute role) out of the house and gives her instructions, along with a lock of her hair. When they both depart, Electra has a few nasty words to say about Helen (commenting on how Helen cut only the tips of her hair, so as not to spoil her looks, 128–129), then cries:

ΕΛ. ὦ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ·
αἵδ᾽ αὖ πάρεισι τοῖς ἐμοῖς θρηνήμασιν
φίλαι ξυνῳδοί· τάχα μεταστήσουσ᾽ ὕπνου
τόνδ᾽ ἡσυχάζοντ᾽, ὄμμα δ᾽ ἐκτήξουσ᾽ ἐμὸν
δακρύοις, ἀδελφὸν ὅταν ὁρῶ μεμηνότα.

ELECTRA: Oh no!
My friends are here again, singing in response
to my lamentations; they will soon wake him from sleep
though he is at rest, and they will make my eye melt
with tears when I see my brother raving. *Orestes* 131–135

The arrival of the chorus women makes Electra cry out, and it is precisely their singing (even 'echoing') quality that Electra fears most of all, since the last thing she wants is noise. Even though Orestes must wake up eventually, or else there would be no play, Electra wants to postpone his ravings as long as possible. Her *ô talain' egô* has the quality of, "Oh, no, not again!", implying that Orestes' mad fits are a horror to behold (and of course, the audience will get a glimpse of such a fit at 253ff.)

Throughout all this, Orestes is asleep and silent. The audience would surely not have assumed the silent Orestes to be mute, but would have expected him to rise and speak at some point, since he was the title

character of the play. Nevertheless, Martin West suggested that a viewer might have worried that Orestes was actually dead:

> The music stops, the dancers become still; Orestes has slept safely through it. But now the final twist of suspense. Is he dead? Just as we are wondering, he surprises us by waking up, apparently happy and refreshed.[15]

The chorus women, who are presumably neighbors (Electra later calls them *Mykênides*, "women of Mycenae" at 1246), express concern for Orestes' health at 152 (*pôs echei?*), and Electra assures them her brother is at least still breathing. A moment later, the chorus women see Orestes move his body slightly: *horais? en peploisi kinei demas* ("Do you see? In the covers he moves his body," 166). Nonetheless, they ask Electra to move closer and check her brother to be sure he hasn't died without her noticing (208–209). It is at that very moment that Orestes awakes and dispels any fears of his having passed on.

The main concern expressed in the *parodos* is not so much whether Orestes is dead, but what the danger will be if he wakes up. This *parodos* is one of two choral moments from extant Euripidean tragedy that make a dramatic issue out of the noise involved with the singing and dancing of a chorus. A similar tension occurs in *Heracles*, when Amphitryon worries that the chorus will wake the sleeping Heracles, who has just killed his sons and wife in his madness (*Heracles* 1042–1044). Bond has even argued that this Heraclean scene, which comes at the climax of that play, served as a model for the opening scene of the *Orestes*, in which the women of Mycenae begin their song by telling themselves to be silent (*siga, siga*, 140), despite the fact that the very act of singing will naturally involve sound.[16] This chorus is far noisier than Helen, who moments before (*Orestes* 71–125) was onstage wheedling sympathy out of Electra and instructing Hermione on how to offer libations at Clytemnestra's grave. There is a sense of realism at work here: a singing chorus of fifteen dancers, along with their musical accompaniment, cannot avoid being more audibly disruptive than the single actor playing Helen and a mute Hermione. With a heightened dramatic tension, Electra admonishes the chorus women to keep their (singing) voices down (she repeats the *siga, siga* in 183), and the women feebly attempt to step (i.e., dance) lightly. Like the end of *Heracles*, this is

[15] West (1987), 195, n. 208–210.
[16] Bond (1981), 332, ad 1042–1087.

a very unwelcome chorus. Electra asks them quite frankly to leave and be quiet about it:

> οὐκ ἀφ' ἡμῶν, οὐκ ἀπ' οἴκων
> πάλιν ἀνὰ πόδα σὸν εἱλίξεις
> μεθεμένα κτύπου;

> ELECTRA: (singing) *Away from us, away from the palace,*
> *won't you ply your way back,*
> *ceasing from noise?* *Orestes* 170–172

Furthermore, she asks them to keep their distance from Orestes' bed (142). This particular detail was so striking that the writer of one of the hypotheses to the play (presumably Aristophanes the Grammarian) devoted several words to the issue of Electra sitting by her brother's feet:

> It is a problem why she does not sit at his head: in that way she would give more of an impression of caring for her brother, by sitting closer. Well, it seems to be because of the chorus that the poet arranged it so. Orestes would have been woken up—and he had only recently and with difficulty fallen asleep—with the chorus women standing any closer. (Hypothesis to *Orestes*, trans. M.L. West)

From a metatheatrical point of view, it is a curious thing for Electra to ask the chorus to leave; if the chorus women depart and do not sing their ode, then the play cannot begin. But is this perhaps what Electra wants? It will eventually be revealed that this play's Orestes is hardly the heroic avenger of the Aeschylean or Sophoclean world; if anything, Orestes and Electra are gang-like adolescents who perpetuate, rather than end, the cycle of violence that has always plagued the House of Atreus.[17] The dramatic benefit, then, of keeping the title character silent for the first 211 lines is a product of Euripides' propensity for playing with and often reversing his audience's expectations of his characters.[18]

[17] For a contrary opinion on the character of Orestes, see John Porter (1994), who argued that Orestes is not the thuggish, gang-like teenager some scholars imagine, but that his actions fall neatly into an understandable paradigm of tragic personae striking out with desperate violence against a cruel universe. This paradigm was already established by Euripides himself, Porter argued, in such plays as *Hecuba* and *Medea*.

[18] Cf. *Medea*, in which Medea is heard crying off-stage in melic anapests, yet is perfectly calm and rational when she appears. In *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's illness is discussed at length by the chorus women before she is carried out of the house on a bed, surrounded by nurse and servants. In Heracles, *Heracles* is absent for the first half of the drama, so that his return (and his vengeance against Lycus) are built up through suspense; but his return home quickly turns to disaster when he is driven mad and kills his wife and children.

An audience wonders if their title character will remain as exhausted, worn out and enfeebled as his sister describes him, and a sleeping Orestes cannot refute or confirm any of the things said about him.[19] When he awakes, he dispels all doubts about himself by gradually rebelling against social injustice and striking back at the society that has condemned him, until at last he is transformed into a new type of madman. Far from the noble Aeschylean Orestes, Euripides' anti-hero is a vicious and self-righteous murderer, ending the play upon the roof of the house with his sword at his own cousin's throat. Perhaps Electra was right in the beginning: it is a tragedy better not begun at all.[20]

c. *Menoeceus in* Phoenician Women

Though Menoeceus does not feature in the prologue of *Phoenician Women*, he is like Adrastus and Orestes in that his silence on stage is well over 100 lines long. The young Menoeceus enters in line 834, along with Teiresias' unnamed daughter, leading the blind seer to meet with Creon. At this point in the drama, Polyneices has begun his attack on Thebes after negotiations (if a shouting match in front of one's mother can be called 'negotiations') with Eteocles failed. After Etecoles and his uncle Creon discussed battle strategies, Eteocles decided to ask the seer Teiresias for advice; but since Eteocles was certain that Teiresias hates him (*momphas echein*, literally "to have a cause of complaint," 773) because he once blamed the seer's craft, he sent Creon's young son Menoeceus to fetch him (768ff.) and escort him to Creon, on the grounds that *soi hêdys es logous aphixetai* ("To you with kindness he will come to speak," 771).

After a choral ode, Teiresias arrives. He addresses Menoeceus in 841, asking how much farther they have to go before they reach Creon, who sent for him. Given that Creon (who has been on stage since 769) himself answers for Menoeceus, and given that the boy does not speak any time soon, it would not have been unreasonable for an original audience to assume Menoeceus was *kôphon prosôpon*, like

[19] Ritoók (2001), 47–48 explored further ways in which "keeping silent" is thematic throughout *Orestes*, e.g., in the custom of being silent to matricides; or, the chorus women's concern for silence when it hears noises coming from off-stage during the murder plot (1311–1312); or, Pylades' silence in the face of Menelaus, which Orestes acknowledges as confirming his complicity in Helen's murder since he "speaks by being silent" (*phêsin siôpôn*, 1592).

[20] I thank Ann Hanson for first suggesting this to me.

Teiresias' daughter. As an apparently mute character, Menoeceus has no part in his father's conversation with the seer concerning Teiresias' recent return from Athens (where he had helped the Athenians against Eumolpus' invasion, 852–855) and Creon's desperate desire to know how to save Thebes.

Scholars have noted the subtle detail with which the characters refer to Eumolpus' recent invasion of Athens, and have considered it a Euripidean self-reference to his earlier play, *Erechtheus* (now fragmentary, but perhaps first performed ten years before *Phoenician Women)*.[21] In *Erechtheus*, the sacrifice of a daughter of the king of Athens was demanded in order for the Athenians to win in battle. Anyone in the original audience of the *Phoenician Women* who had any recollection of *Erechtheus* from the previous decade would find Teiresias' situation quite stunning. He comes in wearing a golden crown of victory (*tonde chrysoun stephanon*, 856), which an audience can presume came at the cost of a human sacrifice; and Teiresias' daughter is carrying the lot-tablets (*klêrous*) he may have used to predict that sacrifice for Erechtheus' daughter. All the visual clues are there that Teiresias just might suggest yet another human sacrifice—which is precisely what he does.[22] Creon's comment that he will take Teiresias' victory wreath (*kallinika stephê*) as an omen (*oiônon*, 858) is surely just that: a bad omen for things to come!

As the exchange develops, silence itself becomes a prominent theme. In typical Teiresian fashion (cf. Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*), the seer is initially gracious; Teiresias says he would have kept his mouth shut in front of Eteocles, yet is willing to speak to Creon since it's Creon who is asking (865–867). Yet when the big moment comes, he is reluctant to share his prophetic knowledge since it will be bitter (*pikron*, 892) to those in power. He starts to walk away, but Creon detains him. Teiresias, worried about the young victim of his prophecy hearing his dreadful fate, asks whether Menoeceus is still present. Creon answers that the boy is actually quite nearby. When Teiresias demands that the boy be sent away, Creon assures him ironically:

ΚΡ. ἐμὸς πεφυκὼς παῖς ἃ δεῖ σιγήσεται.

CREON: Since he is my son, he will keep silent what he must.

Phoenician Women 908

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[21] Vellacott (1975), 195–198 and Foley (1985), 134.

[22] One wonders how comical this subtext might be. Does Teiresias (or perhaps all seers) prescribe virgin sacrifices often? If a seer approaches you with a crown on his head, lock up your young children!

This is ironic because an audience surely assumes that Menoeceus is mute, anyway, and therefore must "keep silent." Creon thinks, of course, that Teiresias is worried about Menoeceus spreading a secret he will soon overhear. However, when Teiresias reveals that Creon must ritually sacrifice (*sphaxai*, 913) Menoeceus to save Thebes, Creon himself becomes concerned that this secret might be spread. This reaction contrasts (most certainly deliberately) with that of the same character in Sophocles' *Antigone* (performed about thirty years earlier). Sophocles' Creon is perfectly willing to sacrifice the interests of his family (i.e., the burial of his nephew, the happiness of his son, and the life of his niece) to the greater interests of the state. Euripides' Creon is almost diametrically opposite, cringing at the thought of losing a son to save his city, and pretending he did not hear the seer, as if Teiresias had not spoken:

ΚΡ. οὐκ ἔκλυον, οὐκ ἤκουσα· χαιρέτω πόλις.
ΤΕ. ἀνὴρ ὅδ᾽ οὐκέθ᾽ αὑτός· ἐκνεύει πάλιν.

CREON: I wasn't listening, I didn't hear. City, farewell!
TEIRESIAS: This man is no longer the same; he dodges.
Phoenician Women 919–920

Teiresias' comment that Creon is "not the same man" is precisely the point; this is a new Creon, desperate to put his family loyalty above duty to the state. Creon then orders Teiresias to be silent (*siga*, 925) and not to tell the city any of these prophecies. But alas, divinely inspired prophecies cannot be taken back or unsaid in this play; their warnings must be heeded. After all, the misfortunes of the Theban royal family began with Laius disobeying Apollo's oracle (*Phoenician Women* 13 ff., which Teiresias himself reiterates at 868 ff.). Knowing that Creon is asking him to commit something quite wrong, Teiresias refuses to be silent:

ΤΕ. ἀδικεῖν κελεύεις μ᾽· οὐ σιωπήσαιμεν ἄν.
ΚΡ. τί δή με δράσεις; παῖδά μου κακατενεῖς;
ΤΕ. ἄλλοις μελήσει ταῦτ᾽, ἐμοὶ δ᾽ εἰρήσεται.

TEIRESIAS: You are ordering me to do wrong; I won't keep silent.
CREON: What will you do to me? Will you kill my child?
TEIRESIAS: That will be a care to others; but I must speak.
Phoenician Women 926–928

Teiresias then explains his prophecy and the bizarre logic of past offenses to the gods that now require Menoeceus (the last offspring of the *Spartoi*, and an unbetrothed one at that) to be sacrificed to Ares. With a

final bemoaning of the thankless occupation of a seer, he departs with his mute daughter off-stage (959). Creon himself falls into a period of silence, prompting the chorus to ask him,

> τί σιγᾷς γῆρυν ἄφθογγον σχάσας;
> κἀμοὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἔκπληξις πάρα.

> CHORUS: Why are you silent, having let your voice go speechless?
> Amazement grips me no less. *Phoenician Women* 960–961

Creon debates with himself what he should do, and decides he must ignore the seer's words and spirit his son out of Thebes. As the boy remains silent, Creon's soliloquy plays with the audience's curiosity about the degree to which Euripides' Creon will be written as the anti-Sophoclean Creon. Finding himself in a situation similar to that of an Agamemnon or an Erechtheus, Creon asserts that he will never sink so low as to slaughter his own son for the city (963–964); nor would he want to be praised for patriotism by someone who would be trying to kill his son (967).[23] Will Euripides' Creon actually succeed in flaunting Teiresias' prophecy and rejecting the safety of the state in order to save his unmarried son's life? In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Creon lost his son Haemon, niece Antigone, and wife Eurydice—three deaths because he did not place his family duties above state duties. Will the Creon of *Phoenician Women* escape such disasters?

Finally, at 977, Menoeceus stuns the audience by breaking his silence; in so doing, he gradually offers answers to our worries about Creon's loyalties. At first Menoeceus only asks his father questions, proceeding into rapid *antilabe*:

> ΜΕ. ποῖ δῆτα φεύγω; τίνα πόλιν; τίνα ξένων;
> ΚΡ. ὅπου χθονὸς τῆσδ' ἐκποδὼν μάλιστ' ἔσῃ.
> ΜΕ. οὔκουν σὲ φράζειν εἰκός, ἐκπονεῖν δ' ἐμέ;
> ΚΡ. Δελφοὺς περάσας ... ΜΕ. ποῖ με χρή, πάτερ, μολεῖν;
> ΚΡ. Αἰτωλίδ' ἐς γῆν. ΜΕ. ἐκ δὲ τῆσδε ποῖ περῶ;
> ΚΡ. Θεσπρωτὸν οὖδας. ΜΕ. σεμνὰ Δωδώνης βάθρα;
> ΚΡ. ἔγνως. ΜΕ. τί δὴ τόδ' ἔρυμά μοι γενήσεται;
> ΚΡ. πόμπιμος ὁ δαίμων. ΜΕ. χρημάτων δὲ τίς πόρος;
> ΚΡ. ἐγὼ πορεύσω χρυσόν. ΜΕ. εὖ λέγεις, πάτερ.

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[23] Following Mastronarde's commentary, this is how I make sense of μή μ' εὐλογείτω τἀμά τις κτείνων τέκνα (*Phoenician Women* 967). Markland and Nauck replace κτείνων with κτείνειν, which Mastronarde dubs "an unparalleled construction ('say in praise that' with acc. + inf.)." It makes less sense to imply that Creon is worried about being praised for killing his son, and more sense that anyone in Thebes who praises Creon is also a person who is implicitly involved in Menoeceus' slaughter.

MENOECEUS: Where should I go? To what city? To what guest-friend?
CREON: Wherever you will be furthest away from this land.
MENOECEUS: Shouldn't you suggest it, and I work out getting there?
CREON: If you pass through Delphi… MENOECEUS: Where must I go (next), father?
CREON: To Aetolia. MENOECEUS: From there, where should I pass through?
CREON: The Thesprotian land. MENOECEUS: To the sacred seats of Dodona?
CREON: You know it. MENOECEUS: And how will this be a protection for me?
CREON: The god will guide you. MENOECEUS: What will be my source of money?
CREON: I will send gold. MENOECEUS: You speak well, father.

Phoenician Women 977–985

Menoeceus' first utterances are all questions, but they are leading ones; they encourage Creon to outline a plan, complete with geography, significantly through two places renowned for their oracular truth (Delphi and Dodona). Creon's belief that the 'god' will guide his son is an interesting alternative to Teiresias' presumably divinely-inspired advice (as if traveling through Delphi and Dodona could win Menoeceus a better prediction!). Menoeceus wants to know where he should travel, what path he should take, and what he will do for money. He finally convinces his father that he will leave once he has said goodbye to his aunt Jocasta, and Creon makes a hasty exit, satisfied that he has managed to protect his son from danger. Next, even more startling, Menoeceus delivers an entire *rhesis* (991–1018) in which he explains to the Phoenician women his motives for his voluntary sacrifice/suicide. Like many of Euripides' heroines who sacrifice themselves for a cause (Macaria, Polyxena, Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis*), the male Menoeceus is driven by fear of being called a coward (*deilos*) for not giving his soul for his country (999–1005)—only here, it contrasts quite vividly with his father's unwillingness to make a personal sacrifice.[24] Menoeceus' character had been left in suspense, but it is finally revealed to be one which cannot allow his father to be less noble than he ought.

Menoeceus does not give the Phoenician women any instructions. He does not ask them to keep his plans a secret, nor does he suggest they noise his fame abroad; he simply explains how he will stab himself near the dragon's pit, then leaves in order to do so. Yet, in the midst of this very episodic play, the memory of Menoeceus' deed is surprisingly

[24] See Stockert (2004), 43–44 for a discussion of the theme of silence in the Menoeceus scene, as it relates to similar silences in scenes of self-sacrifice (*Children of Heracles, Hecuba, Iphigenia in Aulis*).

ubiquitous. The Phoenician women remember him in their ode, even wishing they could have sons like him (1060)—although, of course, they are virgins dedicated to Apollo—and a messenger reports his death to Jocasta while narrating the results of the battle at the seven gates (1090–1092). Jocasta feels pity for Creon for having lost his son, savior of the city though he was (1206). In 1310ff., Creon reappears in sorrow; he has recovered his son's body where it lay below the cliff and brought it back home where each room now resounds with weeping. Menoeceus' silence, then, is supremely well timed by the playwright. By toying with the audience's expectations of him as a mute character, Euripides thereby suspends an understanding of the young man's role in the series of events, and gradually reveals that the young man is, indeed, the key to Thebes' survival in the war—a fact that is reiterated several times.[25] Furthermore Menoeceus' self-sacrifice gives a subtle closure to the audience's concerns with Creon's loyalties; although this Euripidean Creon was perfectly willing to see his city fall before he would kill his own son, Menoeceus would not let him be such a man.

It is interesting to note that although the three instances of partial muteness in the extant Euripidean corpus are male, the archetypal partial muteness scene of extant Greek tragedy is a female one—the Cassandra scene from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. But Aeschylus wrote a partially mute male as well, Pylades, in *Libation Bearers*; his brief speech at lines 900–902 breaks his silence that has lasted throughout the entire play. What common features do the three Euripidean scenes share with Cassandra and Pylades, and is the fact that the Euripidean scenes involve men indicative of a Euripidean interest in the representation of gender? A first common feature is that all these partially mute characters play with an audience's expectations of speech. With so many named mute characters in tragedy, a viewer might expect that after a good 150 lines of silence (and even a choral ode), an actor who has not spoken yet will likely be *kôphon prosôpon*. But once Cassandra, Pylades, Adrastus, Menoeceus and Orestes have spoken, what then? Is there more to their speech than mere surprise? The first four characters (laying Orestes aside for the moment) share a second feature: they are all interested parties in the plot, yet they are passive participants. Cassandra and Menoeceus are 'victims' in the truest sense

[25] Contrast Helene Foley's cynical reading of the play (1985: 132–136), in which the efficacy of Menoeceus' sacrifice is openly doubted.

of the word, meeting their deaths in their plays; Adrastus is a suppliant who must persuade Theseus to rescue the Seven, for the rescue is a task Adrastus cannot do by himself. Pylades is passive in the sense that he is Orestes' companion and fellow conspirator in a murder plot, but does not wield the axe himself. Even though passive participants, these characters reveal new information that is central to the narrative. Cassandra is perhaps the most elaborate instance; her rantings and ravings about the impending murder contain vital information about the plot happening behind the doors—a kind of messenger speech in advance—but her frenzied language is confusing to the chorus of Argive elders. Nevertheless, her knowledge of the past is unquestionably accurate. She is the first person in the *Oresteia* trilogy to mention explicitly the Thyestean feast as part of Argos' miserable history—one of the few facts, incidentally, that the chorus is able to understand, although it is the first that the theater audience has heard of it. By sharing her knowledge of the past and predicting the future, including Orestes' revenge, Cassandra brings all the pieces of the trilogy's narrative together, even before the first play has finished; she even prays that the avenger remember her when he strikes down Agamemnon's murderers (*Agamemnon* 1325–1326). Furthermore, Cassandra is the only person who could know these things; her knowledge of events (in this case, future events) is particular to her. Supported by the prophetic gift of Apollo, Cassandra's story has the authority of truth.

In the case of Pylades in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, his three-line utterance invokes the oracle of Apollo as an authority of truth:

> ποῦ δαὶ τὸ λοιπὸν Λοξίου μαντεύματα
> τὰ πυθόχρηστα, πιστά τ' εὐορκώματα;
> ἅπαντας ἐχθροὺς τῶν θεῶν ἡγοῦ πλέον.

> PYLADES: What then hereafter of the oracles of Loxias
> delivered at Pytho, and what of oaths that are sworn true?
> Consider all men hateful (to you) rather than the gods.
>
> Aeschylus *Libation Bearers* 900–902

Pylades' remarks come at the very moment when Clytemnestra begs her son to pity her, and Orestes hesitates for a moment at the dread task of killing his own mother. Pylades' timely interruption restores Orestes' confidence in the urgency and divine sanction of his revenge, and persuades him to move forward. Even though the legitimacy of Apollo's involvement will be questioned in the third play of the trilogy, his oracular commands to Orestes are brought forward at this crucial

moment as part of the true events leading up to the matricide; Orestes has forgotten this and must be reminded of it anew.

In a similar vein, Adrastus relates his knowledge of the true events leading up to the Theban war—the real story, not rumors or assumptions about what happened. This information is naturally vital to the plot, for without it, Theseus cannot properly judge whether to rescue the bodies of the Seven or not. Theseus has heard of the war against Thebes, acknowledging that Adrastus "hardly marched through Greece in silence" (Eur. *Suppliant Women* 117). Nevertheless, he must ask why precisely Adrastus led his seven troops against Thebes (131), to whom he married his daughters (133), and how he interpreted Apollo's oracle (141), because Theseus presumably has no knowledge of these particulars. Adrastus' timing is carefully planned; there is no need for him to speak until Theseus, having been prepared by Aethra, addresses him directly. Once he has Theseus' full attention, however, he may apply all his persuasive techniques. Unfortunately, Adrastus' timing and persuasive techniques are ineffective. This is similar to Cassandra, whose presentation of new information in Aeschylus' play encourages no action from the chorus of elders; for instance, they do not rush into the house to prevent the murder, and at *Agamemnon* 1346–1371 they debate how to interpret Agamemnon's dying screams, despite having heard Cassandra's prediction. Similarly, Adrastus' explanation of the history of his war against Thebes does not convince Theseus to lend his aid.

As for Menoeceus, he confirms the 'new information' of this play—namely, *Phoenician Women's* version of Creon's character—by his persuasion of his father in the form of reverse psychology. Menoeceus wants his father to leave so that he can kill himself without distraction; therefore he pretends to be eager to leave Thebes, feigning questions about where to go and what to do for money. The ruse works, and Menoeceus can fulfill his role as the savior of Thebes. In contrast to Adrastus whose initial speech contributed vital new information to the narrative of *Suppliant Women*, Menoeceus *is* the vital new information of *Phoenician Women*. He *is* the new sacrifice which Teiresias revealed necessary to the victory of Thebes, and as such, he takes his life into his own hands. As to his passivity: he is an oddly active victim, plunging the sword into his side by himself; yet a certain passivity is nonetheless present, inasmuch as his life is demanded as a sacrifice to Ares.

Cassandra, Adrastus and Menoeceus share a passivity of character, but Orestes is rather different; though he may appear a passive figure

(at least physically) at the start of *Orestes*, he is clearly the protagonist of the drama and emerges into a violent murderer lashing out against the injustice of his world. He is more akin to Heracles in his name play, in that their silences are dramatized as sleep after a period of madness. Silence, then, invites suspense as an audience must guess what Orestes and Heracles will be like when they wake, what further violence they might commit, and how they could possibly be reconciled with reality after their insanity. In *Heracles*, this silence comes at the end of the play and is followed by reconciliation invited by Theseus. In *Orestes*, however, the silence is at the very start of the drama; anything can happen, and (as is typical in Euripides) everything does. Instead of peaceful reconciliation, resolution is repeatedly thwarted, until finally Orestes must fight back with murder, kidnapping, and nearly destroying his ancestral home by fire. As it is, only the intervention of the *deus ex machina* (1625) saves Orestes from committing murder on the rooftop during his shouting match with Menelaus below—a shocking twist to a play beginning with sleep and silence.

Why do no Euripidean women employ partial muteness? If it is correct to read Adrastus' and Menoeceus' (and even Cassandra's and Pylades') silences as preludes to persuasive speeches that involve the revealing of new information (or at least information that one needs to be newly reminded of), Euripidean women persuade in other ways. Song is the mode used by women to share their private knowledge for the persuasion of a male audience, particularly in recognition scenes when that male audience is a kinsman who must rescue them. For Euripidean women, these moments of persuasion and revelation involve a kind of self-defense not necessary to men.[26] As discussed in Chapter 2, Euripidean women's self-defense may have an emotional basis which is more appropriate to lyrics, whereas men's moments of persuasion are more dramatically effective when made at the right time with the right audience, after a period of silence.

[26] Adrastus arguably does engage in some emotional appeal; but then, he is a suppliant (from whom emotion is always expected, male or female), not a wife or sister or mother (like Helen, Iphigenia, Creusa or Hypsipyle) trying to be reunited with her family (which is a gender-specific role).

Women's Silence as Secret-keeping

In moving from Euripidean men to women, the semantics of silence shift from simple non-participation in communication, to deliberate concealment. The reluctance to reveal a secret about oneself is described in Euripides as a 'silence'; acknowledging this silence admits there is a secret to reveal. Interestingly, this is a female dilemma in Euripides' plays and occurs as a confession in front of female choruses; yet revealing the secret in front of sympathetic women does not necessarily mean the secret is out. Two examples are Phaedra in *Hippolytus* and Creusa in *Ion*. In this kind of dramatic silence, the character is actually speaking, but does not talk specifically about what she is hiding (though she hints at it). For example, Creusa sings, *ô psycha, pôs sigasô?* ("Oh soul, should I be silent?" *Ion* 859) and *sigôsa gamous, sigôsa tokous polyklautous* ("Having been silent about the ravishing, silent about the birth that caused many tears," *Ion* 868–869). The essential element in such a 'silence' is an internal debate about whether or not to reveal knowledge of events in her own past in order to move forward in the present. Until the moment of revelation, the character is keeping silent about personal 'dirty laundry'; and once the laundry has been aired, so to speak, it inevitably becomes an issue whether continued silence would have been better.

Phaedra and Creusa are two women driven to wreak destruction on illegitimate stepsons. Phaedra accuses her stepson Hippolytus of rape and kills herself so that he cannot refute her, and Creusa plots to poison the young Ion (whom she presumes is her new stepson, but is actually her own long-lost son). The two plays (*Hippolytus* and *Ion*) are quite opposite in their feel and color: *Hippolytus* ends tragically with two main characters dead; *Ion* is a happy play, with mother and son reunited and no loss of life. However, both plays begin with heroines burdened by a horrible, personal secret which they try desperately to keep silent.

a. *Phaedra*

Euripides' *Hippolytus* is a play about the sexual desire and social reputation of women. Phaedra, wife of king Theseus of Athens, is driven by the goddess Aphrodite to fall in love with her own stepson, Hippolytus, a young man who is a self-professed woman-hating virgin and devotee of the goddess Artemis. Although Phaedra and Hippoly-

tus never exchange words in this play, Phaedra's Nurse informs Hippolytus of his stepmother's passions, sending him into a misogynistic tirade. Even though he swears to keep Phaedra's desire a secret, Phaedra herself fears that her desires will be exposed and that her reputation (and thereby the future of her sons by Theseus) will be tarnished. To protect her good name and chaste reputation (despite the fact that, technically, she has not even committed adultery), she hangs herself and leaves behind a tablet accusing Hippolytus of raping her. Theseus finds the tablet, believes it, and curses Hippolytus with a magic curse given to him by the god Poseidon. He then banishes Hippolytus, who swears he is innocent of the crime of rape; and even though wrongly accused, Hippolytus does not break his oath not to reveal the true nature of Phaedra's desires. Hippolytus is attacked by a sea monster sent by Poseidon, and in the final moments of the play lies dying in his father's arms while the goddess Artemis herself validates his innocence and reveals Phaedra's guilt.

Phaedra's silence about her incestuous love for her stepson Hippolytus has received much scholarly attention. The interconnections between recurring themes of silence and speech (both Phaedra's and Hippolytus'), the interior and exterior of the house, concealment and revelation, and the visible and the hidden (that is, 'the gaze'), have dominated scholarship for decades.[27] Suffice it to say that one narrative thread running throughout the *Hippolytus* is that of Phaedra's big 'secret,' namely, her desire for her stepson, which she never gets the opportunity to act upon. Nonetheless, she considers the very existence of such desires scandalous enough to ruin her reputation forever, and she would rather die than allow that scandal to be revealed to her husband, which would damage the future of her legitimate sons. All the women in the play (chorus and nurse) come to know Phaedra's secret by the middle of the second episode, and although they initially react with horror, they eventually show her sympathy. The nurse then tells Hippolytus (the object of desire) about the secret in the third episode. But as far as men (Theseus, who has been away consulting an oracle, and the citizens of Troezen) are concerned, they do not learn Phaedra's secret until the very end of the play. Until then, the chorus women and Hippolytus keep their promises not to tell the secret, and Phaedra's posthumous letter substitutes lies to cover up the scandalous truth.

[27] See Knox (1952); C. Segal (1970); Zeitlin (1985b); Rabinowitz (1986); Goff (1990); and Ritoók (2001).

When the goddess Artemis finally reveals Phaedra's secret to Theseus, it has lost much of its horror, for Artemis glosses over the incestuous desires as *oistron ê tropon tina gennaiotêta* ("a stinging-madness, or a kind of nobility," 1300–1301).

What is of interest in this chapter is how various persons' reluctance to reveal Phaedra's secret is described as 'silence,' even though this reluctance actually involves speech. In the case of Phaedra herself, the chief purpose of her talking about her 'silence'—her reluctance to reveal her secret—is Euripides' subtle invention of character. Euripides must show under what circumstances this Phaedra can be persuaded to break her silence, with whom she will share her story, and what motivates Phaedra's reluctance to speak in the first place. When Phaedra makes her first appearance at 176, carried out from the house on a bed by servants, she is hardly silent, although she does not make contact with the chorus of female neighbors for some time. She is described by the Nurse as struggling to go inside the house again. When Phaedra does speak (*Hippolytus* 198–202, 208–211, 215–222, 228–231), her words are delirious; she asks for her head to be uncovered, and she addresses only her servants (who are mute), the Nurse, and the goddess Artemis. When she comes to her senses and realizes she has expressed some shockingly immodest desires (such as wanting to go spear hunting or horse riding), she feels shame and hides herself under her veil (249). She does not speak again for another sixty lines; twice the Nurse notes that Phaedra is not responding to questions, and asks "why are you silent? You shouldn't be silent..." (297) and "say something!" (300). The Nurse's utterance of Hippolytus' name at 310 makes Phaedra cry *oimoi*, and alters the mood of the scene to one bristling with tension: will Phaedra break her silence about her desire at the Nurse's prodding? The audience already knows Phaedra's secret, for the goddess Aphrodite spoke of it during the prologue. Phaedra gives sparse hints to the true nature of her desire, but insists that her *pragma* ("deed," which refers to her secret-keeping, 329) brings her honor. The Nurse's reply that by speaking Phaedra would make herself more honorable (332) is the paradox of the play. As Barbara Goff illustrated the problem, in order for Phaedra to gain *timê*, someone must know of her silence.[28] Luckily the audience knows of it and therefore can appreciate the noble struggle being waged within Phaedra's conscience. She claims

[28] Goff (1990), 22.

that when desire first struck her, her first plan was "keeping silent and hiding this disease" (*sigan tênde kai kryptein noson*, 394), since "nothing can be trusted to the tongue" (*glôssêi gar ouden piston*, 395). But there would be no play if no one else knew her secret, and as it is, Phaedra confesses her love for Hippolytus to the Nurse, and thereby to the chorus.

What was preventing Phaedra from revealing her secret in the first place? In addition to common knowledge of virtuous behavior (*eu phronein*, 378, literally "to think well") and of what is good (*ta chrêsta*, 380), she also mentions shame (*aidôs*, 385). Gallons of scholarly ink have been spilled on the exact meaning of *aidôs* in *Hippolytus*, especially because Phaedra explains that there are two kinds.[29] Rather than engage with this debate here, let it suffice to assert that Phaedra's fears of damaging her reputation by revealing the shameful nature of her desires are not without justification in this scene. But of whom is she afraid? Goff argues that in the final analysis, it is men's talk (or more precisely, the lack of it) that validates a Greek woman's reputation. One automatically thinks of the ideal expressed in Pericles' funeral oration, that "the glory of a woman is to be least talked about among men, whether in praise or in criticism" (Thucydides 2.45.2). According to Goff, Phaedra's secret cannot stop with women alone. Men must know about it, for "if the nobility of [her] silence had been known only to women, there would have been no play; a male has to be introduced for women's speech to matter, to make a difference."[30]

However (*contra* Goff), Phaedra's greater and more immediate concern is arguably her reputation among women. It is certainly understandable that any Greek married woman with domestic problems, such as Phaedra, should be concerned to save face in front of women—her neighbors, no less—who might gossip. Scholars such as Virginia Hunter and David J. Cohen have investigated the discourse of gossip in Athenian literature, in particular the Athenian male belief that women noticed things about other women and exercised gossip as a kind of social control. Using Greek comedy and the Greek orators as sources, Hunter and Cohen reached conclusions such as the following:

[29] A short list of articles includes: Dodds (1925); Knox (1952); C. Segal (1970); Kovacs (1980); Craik (1993); Cairns (1993); Furley (1996); Craik (1997). An interesting development in this debate is Craik's argument (1997) that *aidôs* can be suggestive of sexual activity, particularly since the subject of Phaedra's speech is adultery.

[30] Goff (1990), 22.

> [Athenian women] had the same opportunity as neighbors to exchange information and opinions about individuals and families and the same capacity to affect reputations. For women did have a network of acquaintances, mostly neighbors. If this were not so, Aristophanes' three great comedies, *Lysistrata, Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Ecclesiazusae*, would make no sense. One of these plays, moreover, indicates clearly that women visited their friends (*Eccl.* 348–349 and 526–530). In addition, Demosthenes 55. 24–25 documents the kind of family problems rural demeswomen and neighbors shared with one another.[31]

> The neighborhood helps to gather and focus the common knowledge that makes social control effective. This common store of knowledge which the politics of reputation require and produce helps to explain the nature of Athenian social relations. From this perspective, we might well reflect on the implications of one of the orations of Isaeus [...] where neighbors testify that they inferred from the fact that the alleged wife of a man accompanied him to banquets, dined with strangers, and was serenaded at her house, that she must have been an hetaira and not his legal wife (3.13–14).[32]

Tragedy on many occasions mirrors these social realities, and Euripidean women are often critical of other women. In particular, female neighbors (almost always in the form of choruses) constitute the chief community to which a heroine belongs. For example, Medea greets her visiting chorus by asking them not to be indignant with her, for people who live quietly—as she does—often earn a bad reputation (*Medea* 214–218):

> Κορίνθιαι γυναῖκες, ἐξῆλθον δόμων
> μή μοί τι μέμψησθ'· οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς βροτῶν
> σεμνοὺς γεγῶτας, τοὺς μὲν ὀμμάτων ἄπο,
> τοὺς δ' ἐν θυραίοις· οἱ δ' ἀφ' ἡσύχου ποδὸς
> δύσκλειαν ἐκτήσαντο καὶ ῥαθυμίαν.

> MEDEA: Women of Corinth, I have come out of the house
> so that you will not find any fault with me: for I know that many persons
> are haughty, some in private ("away from people's eyes"),
> others in public ("at their doors"); and others from their retiring manner ("quiet foot")
> have acquired ill-repute and a reputation for indifference.
> *Medea* 214–218

This seems paradoxical—the ideally quiet woman should earn a *good* reputation. The woman whose quiet (*hêsychos*) foot does not venture

[31] Hunter (1990), 304.
[32] Cohen (1991), 90.

forth from her door (to use Medea's idioms) ought not to earn *dyskleia*. But here Medea reveals that tragic women are actually expected to participate in intimate female friendships; it is anticipated that tragic women will step out in front of their doors and put themselves on display to friendly female neighbors who can approve or disapprove of her domestic situation. In *Medea*, the neighbors approve (initially) of Medea's revenge on Jason; but in *Andromache*, Hermione blames the malicious gossip of female neighbors as the source of her insane desire to kill her husband's concubine, and she describes women's talk as the "words of Sirens" (*Andromache* 930–936). Not only does Hermione admit that she listened avidly to her neighbors boasting about how they would never allow their husbands to bring a mistress into their marriage beds. She even attributes pernicious motives to these neighbors: one woman might seek personal gain (for example, from taking bribes to help a lover, or from blackmail), another is simply wanton, and another neighbor who has sinned "wants to share her sickness" (*synnosein hautêi thelei, Andromache* 948).[33]

Phaedra, then, is also worried how her neighbors will react to the truth of her illness: that while her husband is away, she is entertaining incestuous desires for her illegitimate stepson. The Nurse's initial reaction to learning of Phaedra's love—disgust and horror—is precisely the sort Phaedra feared. Once the secret is out, the chorus is as horrified as the Nurse, crying in dochmiacs:

> ὀλοίμαν ἔγωγε πρὶν σᾶν, φίλα,
> κατανύσαι φρενῶν. ἰώ μοι, φεῦ φεῦ·
> ὦ τάλαινα τῶνδ' ἀλγέων.

> CHORUS: (singing) *For my part, dear one, may I die before*
> *I ever attain thoughts like yours. Iô moi, pheu pheu!*
> *Oh, miserable for these pains!* *Hippolytus* 364–366

Notably, the chorus women still address Phaedra as *phila*. But as far as they are concerned, Phaedra is done for (*olôlas*) now that she has brought her misfortunes to light (368–369). Phaedra must defend herself with respect to both her desires and her silence. She states that her silence was the appropriate means of maintaining her reputation and, by extension, preventing a scandal for her absent husband, since she herself hates adulteresses (390 ff.). Surely, Phaedra hopes, the women of

[33] Laura McClure (1999), 56–61 has gone so far as to consider gossip a "verbal genre" that is represented in Greek tragedy and comedy as essentially female, with women as "insatiable gossips."

Troezen must recognize her nobility in keeping her incestuous desires to herself.

Barbara Goff in her analysis connected the themes of silence and speech with Phaedra's predicament as the object of the 'gaze':

> [Phaedra's] preoccupations with the ubiquitous gaze arises from the fact that she is constructed as the object of male sight and speech, and can have no existence that is autonomous, without reference to a male.[34]

But Goff's study did not make much distinction between an 'erotic gaze' and a 'social gaze.' In the erotic gaze, one person identifies the other as a desirous object; in the social gaze, one simply sees what another person is doing.[35] In terms of eroticism, it is not Phaedra, but Hippolytus—the handsome man in the prime of his youth—who in this play is the natural object of desire for any Greek man, including all the men in the Athenian audience. Hippolytus' constant hunting makes him very athletic, and it is athletic achievement—if we believe Pindar's Ninth Pythian—that gives a young man sex appeal to women (as well as men):

> πλεῖστα νικάσαντά σε καὶ τελεταῖς
> ὡρίαις ἐν Παλλάδος εἶδον ἄφωνοί
> θ' ὡς ἕκασται φίλτατον
> παρθενικαὶ πόσιν ἤ
> υἱὸν εὔχοντ', ὦ Τελεσίκρατες, ἔμμεν,
> ἐν {τ'} Ὀλυμπίοισί τε καὶ βαθυκόλπου
> Γᾶς ἀέθλοις ἔν τε καὶ πᾶσιν
> ἐπιχωρίοις.
>
> Your many victories at the seasonal
> rites of Pallas, the young women saw and silently
> each prayed that you could be
> her dear husband
> or her son, Telesicrates,
> and in the Olympia too, and in the contests
> of deep-bosomed Mother Earth, and in all your
> local games. Pindar *Pythian* 9.97–103[36]

In the performative society of ancient Athens, all men were accustomed to being the object of the social gaze of other men, as men's public careers were built upon being seen and heard. Men could be judged

[34] Goff (1990), 22.

[35] Goff (1990), 20 did concede that in Aphrodite's narrative of how Phaedra fell in love with Hippolytus, "the woman is source and not object of the gaze," and that "the gaze is specifically described as absent from Hippolytus' relationship with Artemis."

[36] Greek text by Maehler (1971).

socially by women, too, for men bring home news of other men's public affairs. The oration *Against Neaera* (attributed to Demosthenes) warns each man of the jury that his wife or daughter or mother at home will inquire about the trial and ask him how he voted (Demosthenes 59: 110). In the world of comedy, Lysistrata suggests that women would often ask men what happened in the Assembly (Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 505ff.).

In her discussion of 'the gaze,' Goff confronted the problem of how far the 'male gaze' extends, and who among Greek men enjoyed the privilege of looking at women and talking about those they saw:

> Phaidra is trapped into confession by the paradox that her silence must be made speech if she is to gain *timê*, despite the Periklean prohibition on speech about women. In some ways she needs to be spoken about specifically by men, in spite of Perikles; only male speech can legitimise a woman, as it can also powerfully condemn.[37]

However, it would be more accurate to concede that Athenian men could not do any proper 'talking' about respectable women, even though they might occasionally see them. Non-availability to both the erotic gaze and the social gaze was a mark of status, and married women such as Phaedra were marked as being seen solely by their husbands (except perhaps at special public rituals); *hetairai* and flute girls would be acceptable objects of the everyman's erotic gaze. Seeing another man's wife in a potentially improper erotic context was considered a great offense. For example, in the fourth-century court speech Lysias 3 (*Against Simon*), the drunken men who accidentally break into the women's quarters at night when in search of a boy commit a serious transgression, given that the girls there are probably undressed.[38]

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[37] Goff (1990), 22.

[38] The passage reads, "Hearing that the boy was at my house, he came there at night in a drunken state, broke down the doors, and entered the *gynaikonitis* ('women's rooms'); within were my sister and my nieces, who have lived in so well-ordered a manner (αἳ οὕτω κοσμίως βεβιώκασιν) that they are ashamed to be seen even by their kinsmen (ὥστε καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκείων ὁρώμεναι αἰσχύνεσθαι)" (Lysias 3.6). The description of these Athenian girls as "ashamed to be seen even by their kinsmen" has often been interpreted as evidence for Athenian women's seclusion. But the description is hyperbole on Lysias' part. Also, this event clearly took place at night, and the point of the passage is that the girls were either undressed or preparing to retire; naturally young girls would be ashamed to be seen in such a state even by kinsmen. See Nevett (1994), 108–109 and Nevett (1995), 373 for a discussion of the potential meaning of *gynaikôn/gynaikonitis* as merely those portions of the house not open to visitors, and not a space in which women were ever locked up.

Conversely, if women were seen performing socially acceptable tasks, they could be afforded an 'invisibility' to an erotic gaze. Hence in the fictional army space of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, a group of fifteen sight-seeing women can be ignored as posing no problem, but the eager approach of a single mature-age woman can be interpreted as a sexual proposal; for when Clytemnestra approaches Achilles (who does not know her) by herself, he assumes she is making a pass at him (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 833). When he learns her identity, he appropriately feels shame at having almost had an erotic encounter with another man's wife.

Admittedly, what is operative in the army camp at Aulis need not be operative in the land of Troezen, and *Hippolytus* and *Iphigenia at Aulis* are separated by over twenty years. Nonetheless, it can be argued that tragic conventions regarding women's social visibility remain constant throughout the Euripidean corpus. As long as Phaedra (or Clytemnestra in *Iphigenia in Aulis*) does not leave the interior for anything other than acceptable business (which Phaedra does not), no man other than her husband would have anything bad to say about her. Women, however, who have access to Phaedra's intimate household secrets, can potentially gossip about her. Euripidean drama is also aware that women (especially young unmarried women) are susceptible to being gossiped about even by women who are not their intimates; at *Phoenician Women* 193–201, when Antigone and her Tutor stand on the walls of Thebes to gaze at the gathering Argive army, the Tutor rushes the unmarried Antigone back to her "maiden chambers" when he notices an approaching "mob of women" (*ochlos gynaikôn*):

ὦ τέκνον, ἔσβα δῶμα καὶ κατὰ στέγας
ἐν παρθενῶσι μίμνε σοῖς, ἐπεὶ πόθου
ἐς τέρψιν ἦλθες ὧν ἔχρῃζες εἰσιδεῖν.
ὄχλος γάρ, ὡς ταραγμὸς εἰσῆλθεν πόλιν,
χωρεῖ γυναικῶν πρὸς δόμους τυραννικούς·
φιλόψογον δὲ χρῆμα θηλειῶν ἔφυ,
σμικράς τ' ἀφορμὰς ἢν λάβωσι τῶν λόγων
πλείους ἐπεσφέρουσιν· ἡδονὴ δέ τις
γυναιξὶ μηδὲν ὑγιὲς ἀλλήλας λέγειν.

TUTOR: Oh child, go back to the house and inside
remain in your maiden chambers, since
you have had fulfillment of the yearning for the things you wanted to see.
For there is a mob—since a noisy disturbance has entered the city—
of women pressing towards the royal house;
and womankind is by nature fond of censure,

and if they find some small starting-points for words,
they drive on further; and there is a certain delight for women
in saying nothing healthy of one another. *Phoenician Women* 193–201

The Tutor's comments are quite odd, given that the chorus of Phoenician women says nothing about having seen Antigone on the walls, and that the Tutor finds nothing strange about a mob of women entering the city in the first place. If anything, the comment is a foreshadowing technique, pointing towards the crisis of the play when Jocasta persuades Antigone to join her in rushing to the duel between her brothers, despite Antigone's concern for leaving her maiden chambers (*parthenônas eklipous'*, 1275) and her feelings of shame before a crowd (*aidoumeth' ochlon*, 1276). It also foreshadows the play's ending, when the unmarried Antigone will agree to wander in exile with Oedipus, thus putting herself on display to all strangers in the very manner which the Tutor apparently tried to avoid. But the comment is also a brief window into the awareness that Euripidean characters have for elite women's visibility.

Phaedra's status as an elite woman affords her an invisibility to men other than her kinsmen (in this play, her husband and children), yet she cannot be socially invisible to women. The importance of Hippolytus' knowledge of Phaedra's secret is not so much in his social power to judge her and talk about her, as it is in the rarity of his having found out her secret. Because Athenian women's lives (apart from festivals) were spent in interior spaces (as far as men were concerned), then if there was a gathering of women, men had no direct access to it. In this sense, Hippolytus' 'gaze'—or rather, his having witnessed the truth of her desires—is more intense for Phaedra because she is not used to being scrutinized by men other than Theseus, and least of all by the very man she desires. Of course, it can be argued that whether or not Hippolytus has the right to judge Phaedra, that is precisely what he does anyway. His tirade against women (616ff.), however, says less about his social prerogatives than it does about his own obsessive hatred of women which fits his characterization as a male virgin who desires only Artemis. It might also be argued that Hippolytus is not a stranger, but an intimate member of the household, a kinsman by marriage. But if we are to believe Aphrodite's account that Hippolytus is always outside hunting with Artemis (17–18), it is not clear that Phaedra and Hippolytus are accustomed to interacting in the household at all (and in fact, they never speak face-to-face in

this play). Phaedra's first glimpse of Hippolytus was during his visit to Athens to participate in the mysteries; she did not live in Troezen until Theseus was exiled from Athens. As Aphrodite narrates, Phaedra and Hippolytus have been living under the same roof for less than a year (24ff.); as such, they are virtual strangers. Knowing that Hippolytus' loyalties in the household would be for his absent father rather than for his father's Cretan wife, Phaedra describes her greatest fear: that Hippolytus in his anger will tell what he knows to Theseus (689–690), the one man whose gaze truly matters.

Finally, why exactly does Theseus gaze matter? In this land of Troezen, so close to Athens, Theseus' knowledge of his wife's adulterous passion would have serious social consequences for her legitimate sons, as she explains twice:

ὡς μήποτ' ἄνδρα τὸν ἐμὸν αἰσχύνασ' ἁλῶ,
μὴ παῖδας οὓς ἔτικτον· ἀλλ' ἐλεύθεροι
παρρησίᾳ θάλλοντες οἰκοῖεν πόλιν
κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν, μητρὸς οὕνεκ' εὐκλεεῖς.
δουλοῖ γὰρ ἄνδρα, κἂν θρασύσπλαγχνός τις ᾖ,
ὅταν ξυνειδῇ μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς κακά.

PHAEDRA: … in order that I may never be discovered shaming my husband,
(and) the children that I bore; rather, free
and flourishing with freedom of speech, let them dwell in the city
of famous Athens, of good repute on account of their mother.
For it enslaves a man, even if he be bold of heart,
whenever he is aware of the sins of his mother or father.
Hippolytus 419–425

εὕρημα δή τι τῆσδε συμφορᾶς ἔχω
ὥστ' εὐκλεᾶ μὲν παισὶ προσθεῖναι βίον
αὐτή τ' ὄνασθαι πρὸς τὰ νῦν πεπτωκότα.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' αἰσχυνῶ γε Κρησίους δόμους
οὐδ' ἐς πρόσωπον Θησέως ἀφίξομαι
αἰσχροῖς ἐπ' ἔργοις οὕνεκα ψυχῆς μιᾶς.

PHAEDRA: Indeed, I have a remedy for this misfortune
so as to bestow upon my sons a life of good-repute,
and myself profit against things as they have turned out now.
For I shall never shame my Cretan home
nor shall I come before Theseus' face
with shameful deeds done—for the sake of one life. *Hippolytus* 716–721

For Phaedra, it is Theseus' *prosôpon* she fears facing most, since the future *eukleia* of her sons' lives in Athens (including *parrhêsia*, the right to free speech) is contingent on Theseus' acceptance of them as legitimate

children; such acceptance might be withheld if Theseus knew of her adulterous desires. She even implies that gossip about her would shame her natal family in Crete, as if shame could go backwards in the generations, and the sins of the daughter reflect on the parents. Given her family's disastrous history of monstrous female desires (Phaedra invokes Pasiphaë and Ariadne at 337 and 339, adding herself in 341 as a third wretched member of this Cretan clan), could Phaedra shame them any further? Phaedra also indulges in some hyperbole; she imagines that Hippolytus will blab her secret to Theseus' father Pittheus and thus "fill the whole land with shameful stories" (*plêsei te pasan gaian aischistôn logôn*, 692), which of course would also affect her sons' future claims to legitimacy. In the end her suicide dramatizes the terrible paradox: even though she never physically commits adultery, she believes that even the desire itself would be scandalous enough in Theseus' eyes to put her sons' future in jeopardy—and she is willing to die and cause another man's death in order to prevent such a scandal.

Phaedra is not the only person who keeps silent about her 'secret'; the chorus women and Hippolytus do the same. Theirs is another semantic range of *sigê*: not merely the keeping of one's own personal secret, but rather the keeping of a secret for someone else. This will be discussed in Chapter 5. For now, however, *sigê* as a form of tragic woman's speech in keeping her own personal secret has one further example: Creusa.

b. *Creusa*

Looking now to Euripides' *Ion*, Creusa shares many of the same characteristics as Phaedra. Creusa's 'secret' is of a personal nature—in her case, rape, pregnancy, childbirth, and exposure of her infant. The audience, knowing about this secret from the divine prologue, will expect her to be tempted to break her silence as the play progresses. However, her motivations to maintain that silence, the precise circumstances of her confession, the identity of her confessors, and the consequences of her confession are all left to the invention of the playwright Euripides.

Creusa's first appearance in the play is rife with suspense as she arrives at the oracle of Delphi and remembers Apollo's violence years before. The young Ion asks why she is sad, but Creusa says she will stay silent about the matter (*egô te sigô*, 257). She and Ion engage in small talk which grows more personal with each moment, until finally Creusa is tempted to share her story with Ion, but stops herself, all

within the same line: *akoue dê ton mython; all' aidoumetha* ("Listen to the story, then; but I am ashamed!" *Ion* 336). As with Phaedra, shame is what makes Creusa reluctant to break her silence. Ion's response is noteworthy: he says she will thus accomplish nothing, since shame is an ineffectual goddess (*ou tara praxeis ouden; argos hê theos*, 337). That does not, however, deter Creusa from saving face; she decides to speak of her rape as if it had happened to someone else, a 'friend' of hers. Just as with Phaedra, Creusa's fears of a negative reaction to her secret are justified; Ion's immediate reaction to the story of the rape by Apollo is refusal to believe it, and he even suggests that some mortal man was responsible for the woman's shame (341). Eventually, Ion has sympathy with Creusa's friend (just as Phaedra's Nurse eventually had sympathy for her), and even stops the conversation with the suggestion that Phoebus himself feels shame (*aischynetai to pragma*, 368). As the scene ends, Creusa has remained silent about her own involvement in the rape story, so that the tension of her reluctance to reveal her secret is still present. She complicates matters further by asking Ion to remain silent about the story in the presence of Xuthus (*siga pros andra*, 395), again out of shame (*mê tin' aischynên labô*, 395).

In fact, Creusa does not break her silence about her rape until mid-play, after Xuthus has received the oracle which convinces him (and the chorus) that Ion is his bastard son. When the chorus women tell Creusa that Xuthus plans to adopt Ion into the family, yet keep his parentage a secret, Creusa finally breaks down and sings the story of her rape. But why does she unburden herself now, and not earlier? Her song begins with a debate whether now is the time to break her 'silence':

ὦ ψυχά, πῶς σιγάσω;
πῶς δὲ σκοτίας ἀναφήνω
εὐνάς, αἰδοῦς δ' ἀπολειφθῶ;
τί γὰρ ἐμπόδιον κώλυμ' ἔτι μοι;
πρὸς τίν' ἀγῶνας τιθέμεσθ' ἀρετῆς;
οὐ πόσις ἡμῶν προδότης γέγονεν;
στέρομαι δ' οἴκων, στέρομαι παίδων,
φροῦδαι δ' ἐλπίδες, ἃς διαθέσθαι
χρῄζουσα καλῶς οὐκ ἐδυνήθην,
σιγῶσα γάμους,
σιγῶσα τόκους πολυκλαύτους.

CREUSA: (singing) *Oh my soul, should I keep silent?*
But should I reveal my bedding-down in the shadows
And shed my shame?
For what obstacle is still in my way?

With whom am I engaging in a contest of virtue?
Has not my husband been a betrayer?
I am bereft of house, bereft of children,
And gone are my hopes that I wanted
To set aright, but could not
By concealing my rape,
Concealing the lamentable childbirth. *Ion* 859–869

Her song repeats the images of silence and shame that were encountered earlier in the play. Here Ion's earlier statement apparently comes to fruition: shame is an ineffectual divinity (337), at least when the purpose of shame is to protect a woman's virtue against a loved one who has betrayed her. For Creusa, there is suddenly no benefit in maintaining a reputation, when her husband—the chief person whom the truth of her adultery with Apollo would damage—has himself produced a bastard child. But Creusa does not run off stage to find Xuthus and tell him about her lost child; instead she makes her confession to the chorus women and the Old Man (*presbytês*) who is her most trusted slave. These servants are obviously not central to the plot; what would matter instead is if Xuthus were to learn of Creusa's secret (as, of course, Ion does in the recognition scene). Why, then, does Creusa choose these non-combatants as her audience? Clearly, Creusa is confessing for herself:

οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος, ὃ στέρνων
ἀπονησαμένη ῥᾴων ἔσομαι.

CREUSA: (singing) *No more will I hide the rape; lifting this load up from my breast, I will feel better.* *Ion* 874–875

She unburdens herself so that she will "become better" or "feel better," a phrase which has medical usage.[39] Her confession is self-indulgent, and her audience is significantly made of persons of such a social standing that they may sympathize with her but cannot judge her.

c. *Euripidean Men*

Unlike Phaedra and Creusa, Euripidean men do not have long-term secrets that need to be concealed. There is, however, some concern shown for private matters that are known—i.e., they are not 'secrets'—

[39] For the medical use of ῥᾴων, cf. *Heracles* 1407, "Will you become better if you have this drug?"

but are best kept at the back of people's minds and not talked about. In *Phoenician Women*, Oedipus is shut up behind closed doors by his sons so that he and his shame will be forgotten (63–65).[40] Another Euripidean example of hiding family scandals is the fragmentary *Cretans*. In fragment 427e, Minos demands that Pasiphaë and the Minotaur be shut away so they may no longer look on the light of the sun (48–49); this is in keeping with the male chorus' earlier suggestion that Minos "think of a way to conceal them" (*phrontison eu kalypsai*, 3). But Minos does this only when it has become convenient for him, since he himself had apparently been broadcasting Pasiphaë's bestiality. In the same scene, Pasiphaë defends herself by claiming she tried to hide the family's 'dirty laundry' that was the birth of the Minotaur, but it was Minos who talked about it:

> κἄπειτ' ἀυτεῖς καὶ σὺ μαρτύρῃ θεοὺς
> αὐτὸς τάδ' ἔρξας καὶ καταισχύνας ἐμέ;
> κἀγὼ μὲν ἡ τεκοῦσα κοὐδὲν αἰτία
> ἔκρυψα πληγὴν δαίμονος θεήλατον,
> σὺ δ', εὐπρεπῆ γὰρ κἀπιδείξασθαι καλά,
> τῆς σῆς γυναικός, ὦ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν φρονῶν,
> ὡς οὐ μεθέξων πᾶσι κηρύσσεις τάδε.

> PASIPHAË: And then do you shout, and do *you* invoke the gods,
> you yourself who did these things and brought shame down upon me?
> And I, the mother and in no way guilty,
> I hid the heaven-sent blow of the god,
> but you—for these were proper and lovely things to put on display!—
> you who think the most wicked thoughts among men!—
> you proclaim these things as your wife's, as though you had no part in them.
> *Cretans* 472e. 29–33[41]

[40] This concern for family 'dirty laundry' is more common in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. A fragment of Sophocles (fr. 745, Lloyd-Jones) reads: "Activity that is well concealed at home should not by any means be heard of by outsiders (*pros thyraiôn*)." In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the Thyestean feast hangs at the back of everyone's memory, yet it is clearly family baggage that no one wants to talk about, except in subtle references. The Watchman may even hint at it at the end of his prologue (*Agamemnon* 36–39). In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, Creon entreats Oedipus to return to Thebes and not embarrass the family further by walking about and advertising the family's misfortunes; Creon lays particular emphasis on being able to see the unmarried and homeless Antigone, whom he pities as a ready victim to be seized or raped by anyone (*Oedipus at Colonus* 744–759). Oedipus later retorts that Creon is an even worse offender, in that he *talks* about the family's scandals (960ff.) and thinks it right to say everything that should not be spoken (*arrêton*, 1001).

[41] Text by Collard (1995).

Pasiphaë's emphasis on Minos' many attempts at speech (shouting, invoking the gods, proclaiming, putting things on display) deliberately contrasts with her own attempt at hiding the "heaven-sent blow" and keeping it quiet. After Pasiphaë finishes her arguments with the claim that, if put to death, she would be dying free and innocent while the penalty should be his, Minos significantly refers not to her attempts at keeping things silent in the past, but to her brazen speech in the present. What remains of his reply to the chorus of Cretan men begins:

> ἆρ̣ ἐστόμωται; μ[ ] βοᾷ.
>
> MINOS: Doesn't she have a hard edge to her mouth? [...] she is shouting.[42]
>
> *Cretans* 472e. 44

Then Minos has difficulty making up his mind. Although Pasiphaë's *rhesis* indicates that Minos intended to kill her, he instead orders that she and the bull be hidden away. Nonetheless, it is clear that it was not Minos, but Pasiphaë—the woman—who was initially concerned with keeping the circumstances of her pregnancy a secret.[43]

On the whole, Euripidean men are not concerned about hiding personal secrets from anyone. Instead, their secrets are the sort that have immediate practical consequences, but which might be revealed at a proper time. In *Ion*, Xuthus plans to lie to Creusa about Ion's identity so that he can establish the boy in Athens as his son without incurring her jealousy; but he will choose a later time to persuade her to accept him as his heir, and the secret is not meant to be permanent (*Ion* 657–660). In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Agamemnon's plot to lure his daughter into the army camp on the pretense of a marriage to Achilles is a secret ruse for sacrificing her to Artemis. Agamemnon surely knows his silence on the matter must end eventually, at the very latest at the moment of the sacrifice itself. As it turns out, neither Xuthus nor Agamemnon is particularly good at plotting intrigues, for both ruses fail miserably. It seems that the maintaining of selective silence is a woman's art.[44]

These Euripidean characteristics can be illustrated more clearly by contrasting a scene from Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* where a man

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[42] See Collard (1995), 77 ad 44 for commentary on the verb στομόω.

[43] The concealed pregnancy plot might have been a characteristic female secret in Euripidean tragedy, from what we can reconstruct of the lost plays; oftentimes this was combined with a reunion between the mother and her adult children. Compare *Ion, Antiope, Captive Melanippe*, etc.

[44] This aspect of Euripidean men as bad plotters will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

is reluctant to share his master's secret. In Sophocles' play, Heracles' wife Deianeira has been anxiously awaiting her husband's return to his home in Trachis after many years, and she fears he might be dead. Their son Hyllus reveals that Heracles has been in bondage to Queen Omphale of Lydia for the past year (*Women of Trachis* 69), but is now in Euboea preparing to sack the city of king Eurytus (74). A messenger appears (180) to announce that Heracles is at last returning home, and the herald Lichas also arrives (225) with a bevy of captive women and proclaims that Heracles has been victorious over Eurytus and made slaves of his city's inhabitants. But Lichas is reluctant to tell Deianeira a disturbing secret, namely the true story of Heracles' abduction of Iole—that she was the daughter of king Eurytus, and it was out of desire for her that Heracles sacked her town. Lichas is willing to broadcast the true story to a large group of men off-stage, then tells his mistress a lie, but is proven wrong by another man who had witnessed Lichas' earlier statement (402 ff.). When Deianeira insists (436 ff.) that she is not a spiteful woman, nor the sort of wife to blame either her husband or Iole, Lichas confesses the whole truth, holding back no details (472 ff.). Lichas dutifully tried to cover up his master's personal secret and protect his reputation, not from the general public, but from the master's wife.

This is in sharp contrast to the kind of secret keeping that happens in Euripides. It is women—Creusa and Phaedra—in Euripides' plays who wish to keep personal secrets from their spouses (and from other women), but (like Lichas) they are driven to confess all. Even Pasiphaë (with some adjustments) falls into this pattern. These Euripidean women's secrets involve sexual passivity that is potentially scandalous (rape, incestuous desire, and even bestiality in Pasiphaë's case) in contrast to the publicly known sexual activity of Heracles in *Women of Trachis*, or Xuthus' supposed dalliance with Ion's supposed mother.

Those Euripidean men who keep secrets from their wives (Xuthus and Agamemnon) are like Lichas in that they have no trouble broadcasting the truth to others; Xuthus has a banquet at Delphi in Ion's honor, and Agamemnon's plot to sacrifice Iphigenia is certainly known by anyone in the fleet aware of Calchas' prophecy. Xuthus does not have a confession scene, and Agamemnon's confession in *Iphigenia in Aulis* (although significantly it is his 'silence' which proves his guilt) is not so much a revelation of his secret (Clytemnestra had figured that out already) as a means of delaying his explanation of his actions for another hundred lines:

ΑΓ. ἀπωλόμεσθα· προδέδοται τὰ κρυπτά μου.
ΚΛ. πάντ' οἶδα, καὶ πεπύσμεθ' ἃ σὺ μέλλεις με δρᾶν·
  αὐτὸ δὲ τὸ σιγᾶν ὁμολογοῦντός ἐστί σου
  καὶ τὸ στενάζειν· πολλὰ μὴ κάμῃς λέγων.
ΑΓ. ἰδοὺ σιωπῶ· τὸ γὰρ ἀναίσχυντον τί δεῖ
  ψευδῆ λέγοντα προσλαβεῖν τῇ συμφορᾷ;

AGAMEMNON: We are done for! My secrets are betrayed.
CLYTEMNESTRA: I know all, and we've heard what you intend to do to me.
  Your very silence is your confession,
  and your groaning; don't tire yourself by speaking.
AGAMEMNON: See, I am silent; for why should I,
  by lying, add shamelessness to misfortune? *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1140–1145

Clytemnestra takes the bait, and with an *akoue dê nun* ("Now you listen!" 1146) launches into her *rhesis*, containing every conceivable argument for why Agamemnon should spare their daughter. At 1211 Iphigenia herself speaks, wishing she had the voice of Orpheus to persuade her father. These women's pleas allow Agamemnon to remain silent and not have to defend himself until 1255, by which point he has had plenty of time to gather his thoughts; and his justification of his actions is relatively brief (1255–1275), exactly a third the length of Clytemnestra's *rhesis* and half the length of Iphigenia's. Agamemnon's confession of his secret, and subsequent silence, is therefore quite different from what happens to women like Cresua or Phaedra. Women's secrets are personal and sexual; Agamemnon's secret is about ritual murder, and his incompetence in keeping the secret is a testament to his characteristic indecisiveness.

Some Conclusions

Why does Euripides invent women (and married women at that), rather than men, who have personal secrets that they are reluctant to reveal out of shame? In the Greek world that both frames tragedy and is affirmed by it, married women are accustomed to being looked at, both by their husbands and by other women. Yet the social dynamics of this act of looking (in particular, which subset of each sex may gaze on another) are different. Husbands watch, scrutinize, and judge their wives' behavior. All women have the capacity to scrutinize all other women. Men can be scrutinized, too, both by men (e.g., in Hippolytus' *agôn* with Theseus) and by women (e.g., Phaedra's desire for

Hippolytus). But while men may look at more than one woman (e.g., at a mistress), women (as Medea explains it at *Medea* 244–247) must look to one man alone.[45] Nor is there any socially acceptable mechanism outside women's own internal world for validating the judgments women might make of men. For all that Medea and her chorus agree that Jason is doing wrong, nonetheless Medea admits that divorces are discreditable (*ouk eukleeis*) for women, and it is impossible for them to refuse a husband (*Medea* 236–237); hence she resorts to supernatural and socially monstrous means to bring about the misfortune which, in her judgment, Jason deserves.

Derivative of these dynamics is the taboo against Greek women 'looking' to a man other than their husband, since such a gaze would complicate men's anxieties about the legitimacy of their offspring. Euripides was critiqued by his contemporary, Aristophanes, for his preoccupation with sexually mature women and their desires. Aristophanes' own works, of course, were the comic expressions of the same phenomenon—sexually mature women and their desires. In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* (383–417), the women of Athens chide Euripides for depicting women as "adulterous, lecherous, bibulous, treacherous, and garrulous," and women can no longer succeed in their usual tricks (such as substituting babies) since Euripides has made Athenian men more wary of women's deceits. At Aristophanes' *Frogs* 1043–1055, the ghost of Aeschylus berates Euripides for bringing *pornas* ("whores") and *erôsan gynaika* ("a woman in love") like Phaedra and Stheneboea on the stage, and thus corrupting society. Much of this criticism against Euripides was directed at women in plays which are not extant. *Stheneboea, Phoenix*, and the "other" *Hippolytus* dramatized women's false accusations of rape (the 'Potiphar's wife' plot).[46] Though we know very little of the particulars of these lost dramas, one can surmise that the women in these plays all desperately needed to conceal their adulterous desires from their husbands, but might not have started out as sympathetic characters. However, what does survive—the stories of Phaedra, Creusa and Pasiphaë—invites us to pause before taking the Aristophanic criticism of Euripidean women's lasciviousness and treacherousness at face value. Clearly Euripides goes to great pains to illus-

[45] Cf. Goff's (1990: 22) comments on this point: "The woman herself does not possess a gaze except in so far as she hides it (e.g. *Hippolytus* 246) or falls impermissibly in love."

[46] Gibert (1997) has argued that the lost play traditionally called the 'First *Hippolytus*' is actually the second.

trate that these women are sexual victims as much as they are sexually aggressive. Pasiphaë is the victim of Poseidon's retaliation for Minos' impiety; Phaedra's desire is the curse of a cruel Aphrodite; Creusa's illegitimate pregnancy was the result of a god's act of violence. The devious deaths that Phaedra and Creusa plot against the illegitimate stepsons who threaten them (Hippolytus and Ion) are not the product of some sort of innate female evil, but are the only means available to them to protect themselves against the disruption that threatens their domestic security. The system which allows women to be judged but not to judge men—which makes women natural victims, but expects men to exercise authority—binds women in such a way that violent deception arises as the only recourse to maintain their safety in the system. By accusing Hippolytus of rape, Phaedra hopes to maintain her reputation; by killing off Ion, Creusa hopes to maintain her power in the royal household and punish her husband for his infidelity. Though this does not excuse these women of culpability for taking such drastic measures, that is the tragedy of Euripides' women: a tragedy of social circumstances, miscommunication, and desperation that drive them to murder. But none of it would have been possible were it not that these women began as victims in a system where their own motivations do not matter, but the judging eyes of husbands do.

Finally, the Euripidean semantics of *siôpê* and *sigê* are such that very few Euripidean women, when engaging with this vocabulary, are actually silent in the sense of 'not-speaking.' It is worthwhile to note that this is in contrast to the Sophoclean convention of the female silent exit. Jocasta in *Oedipus the King*, Deianeira in *Women of Trachis*, and Eurydice in *Antigone* all depart the stage in silence (or are described in terms of *siôpê*) before committing suicide.[47] These Sophoclean exits without a word elicit much bewilderment and anxiety on the part of a chorus or a messenger. Euripides' heroines, however, carry themselves quite differently and go off to die with elaborate speeches (Phaedra,

[47] See Montiglio (2000), 238–245 for a full discussion of these passages. She argued that "silent departure prior to suicide was perceived as a conventional behavior of tragic heroines, as the expected and legitimate way for them to announce their gesture," and "a last silent gesture is the only acceptable introduction to a woman's suicide in Greek tragedy" (Montiglio 2000: 244). But she arrived at this conclusion by beginning with the three Sophoclean examples (Eurydice, Jocasta, Deianeira), then examining two Euripidean examples (Medea and Evadne) to show the contrast which proves the rule. Montiglio was overgeneralizing and envisioning a tragic convention, when in fact there is a Sophoclean vs. Euripidean convention.

Polyxena, Evadne, Iphigenia, Macaria). Unlike Sophocles, Euripides wants his women's motivations to be known, allowing for no guessing. Even more so, he wants his female characters to desire to have their motivations known.

CHAPTER FIVE

SILENCE II: SOLIDARITY AND COMPLICITY

The previous chapter examined two kinds of Euripidean silences: male characters who are physically silent for long periods (over a hundred lines) after their first entrance; and women who engage with the vocabulary of silence (σιγή, σιγάω, σιωπή, σιωπάω) to encompass concepts of keeping personal secrets. There is still another signification of silence in Euripides, and that is the willingness to keep silent the secrets of others. This is usually undertaken by a female chorus; Euripides also invents two characters who perform this same function—Hippolytus and Theonoe—who, interestingly enough, are both self-professed virgins.

'Silent' Female Choruses

It has often been observed that no intrigue in Greek tragedy can be successful without the complicity of the chorus.[1] In the case of Euripides, all but one of his extant intrigue tragedies have female choruses, and their complicity often includes a promise to 'keep silent.'[2] There are, of course, limits to any Greek chorus' involvement in a plot,

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[1] E.g., Paduano (1985), 159.

[2] 'Intrigue tragedies' are those with a plot that involves deceit and creates an opposition between the hero/heroine and his/her victim. This is in contrast to plays in which the plot centers on a battle (*Children of Heracles, Phoenician Women*), or the long-term aftermath of a battle (*Trojan Women*), or both (*Suppliant Women); Alcestis* is somewhat unique in focusing on a domestic crisis (mourning for the death of a wife) which ends happily. In 'intrigue tragedies,' the intrigues aim at death (*Hippolytus, Bacchae, Iphigenia in Aulis*), murder (*Medea, Andromache, Electra, Heracles, Ion, Orestes*, the fragmentary *Antiope)*, maiming (*Hecuba*), or escape (*Helen, Iphigenia in Tauris*). Sometimes the intrigue fails (in *Ion*, Creusa's attempt to poison Ion thankfully fails; in *Andromache*, Menelaus' plot to murder Andromache's son is thwarted; in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Agamemnon's attempt to deceive his daughter is uncovered). In all the above mentioned tragedies, only *Heracles* has a male chorus, and the intrigue (in mid-play) is Heracles' murder of Lycus. One might also include the disputed *Rhesus* and the satyr-play *Cyclops* (both of which have a male chorus, and an intrigue).

given the conventional physical separation between actors and choruses in the theater. Euripides, however, goes beyond the mere physical and enables his female choruses to share in the development of an intrigue by endowing them with a communal personality that is constantly engaged morally and ethically with a heroine. One of the crucial elements in this is the creation of female friendships. The female solidarity that so often operates in Euripides' tragedies (and, for that matter, in Aristophanes' comedies *Ecclesiazusae, Thesmophoriazusae*, and *Lysistrata*) is based on the mutual dependence and propinquity of Athenian women in real life. Certainly Athenian men had an awareness that women visited each other, borrowed things from each other, and established intimate friendships. Euripides represents women as a cohesive group. The reverse does not happen, and Euripidean men cannot appeal to a male solidarity or a common 'manhood,' but only specific shared personal experiences.

A crucial determinant in whether a female chorus keeps silent about a particular intrigue is female solidarity; in *Medea, Hippolytus, Iphigenia in Tauris*, and *Helen*, the choruses agree to keep secrets because they are convinced that the heroine's interests coincide with their own. In *Ion*, the chorus women refuse to keep silent about Xuthus' secret because of their loyalty to their mistress, Creusa, which they express as a condemnation of the infidelities of men. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, however, the chorus women do not break the silence imposed on them by Agamemnon, because there exists no female friendship between themselves and Iphigenia and Clytemnestra, and so (surprisingly) female solidarity does not operate.

The oaths to silence made by Euripidean female choruses differ from male silences in two important respects. First, the 'silence' of these female choruses is rarely the equivalent of 'muteness' or 'not speaking,' as in the case of 'partially mute' men in the previous chapter. Although some form of the Greek word *sigaô* is used in reference to virtually all these 'silent' female choruses, this does not mean that choruses stop communicating; it means that when they speak to anyone other than their heroine, they do not mention her plot. In the *Hippolytus* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, this goes one step further and involves half-truths or lies. The extent of the chorus' communication varies from play to play; and indeed, it seems a Euripidean convention that choruses tend to avoid lengthy conversations with actors other than a single heroine or hero with whom they might share some rapport. Choruses invariably make small rejoinders at the end of competing speeches made in an

agôn, so that their involvement in communication often sounds artificial and contrived.

Second, a reflection on a passage from *Children of Heracles* is in order:

ξένοι, θράσος μοι μηδὲν ἐξόδοις ἐμαῖς
προσθῆτε· πρῶτον γὰρ τόδ' ἐξαιτήσομαι·
γυναικὶ γὰρ σιγή τε καὶ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
κάλλιστον εἴσω θ' ἥσυχον μένειν δόμων.

MACARIA: Strangers, please don't think my coming out is brashness.
This is the first thing I will ask,
Since, for a woman, silence and *sôphronein*
Are the best thing, as well as staying quietly within the home.
Children of Heracles 474–477

As this brief quote from Macaria's speech suggests, Euripidean women are aware of the social expectations concerning their speech. Ideally, tragic women are separated from the greater public by remaining in the home, and they do not speak—unless necessary—in the company of men who are not of their immediate family. Yet in many situations in Euripides, when women observe these ideals, the results are disastrous. The choruses of the following plays on the whole do not speak out of place in the presence of men—yet by maintaining that silence, they are also concealing important knowledge of events being plotted against men. It may be true that idealized female silence in some contexts preserves the authority of men; e.g. Aethra in Euripides' *Suppliant Women* withdraws from the conversation between Theseus and Adrastus, thus highlighting Theseus' role as the real decision-maker (as was discussed in Chapter 4). Yet these choruses of women, by doing what they should do—by being silent—are actually participating in toppling male authority figures. This is not always a bad thing; an audience of *Helen* wants Theoclymenus to be toppled, for instance. It suggests, however, that the semantics of silence are so ambiguous that idealized female silence perhaps cannot exist anywhere.

a. Medea

Medea of 431 BCE is the earliest of Euripides' surviving plays to utilize a female chorus sworn to silence, and is perhaps the most dramatically sophisticated and disturbing. When the Corinthian women of the chorus enter the stage, they immediately advertise their goodwill towards their neighbor. They tell Medea's Nurse:

οὐδὲ συνήδομαι, ὦ γύναι,
ἄλγεσι δώματος,
ἐπεί μοι φιλία κέκραται.

CHORUS: (singing) … *nor do I take pleasure, woman,*
at the misfortunes of this house,
since I have had friendship with it. Medea 136–138

μήτοι τό γ' ἐμὸν πρόθυμον
φίλοισιν ἀπέστω.
ἀλλὰ βᾶσά νιν δεῦρο πόρευσον οἴκων
ἔξω· φίλα καὶ τάδ' αὔδα,
σπεύσασά τι πρὶν κακῶσαι
τοὺς ἔσω· πένθος γὰρ μεγάλως τόδ' ὁρμᾶται.

CHORUS: (singing) *May my goodwill never*
be absent from my friends!
But now, go bring her here from out of the house;
say that friends are here, too;
hurry before she harms
those within; for this grief is hastening greatly. Medea 178–183

The chorus' goodwill (*prothymon*) is tempered by their knowledge of Medea's angry passion (*barythymon organ*, 176) and her capacity to do harm (*kakôsai*), and indeed her cries from within the house sound horrific. However, when they first see her, she is calm, coherent, and rational. She speaks to them as a woman to women with common misfortunes, reflecting on "us women" as a kind of separate creature, and a wretched one at that, since *gynaikes esmen athliôtaton phyton* ("we women are the most miserable creature," 231). Her appeal to women's interests succeeds as a persuasive device, even though Medea is a foreigner with a past. She highlights women's need for luck in marriage, and the privileges of men to go out of the house for company while women must look to one man alone (235ff.). She confirms what the chorus women already know—that Jason has abandoned her to marry the Corinthian king's daughter—and reminds them that she, as a foreigner, has no family with whom she can take refuge. It is for this reason, she says, that she needs the chorus' help; if she can find the means to punish Jason, would they keep silent? (*sigan*, 263) To drive the point home, she reminds them that when a woman is threatened with the loss of her bed, *ouk estin allê phrên miaiphonôtera* ("there is no other mind with more thoughts of blood," 266). The Corinthian women readily give their promise—in fact, these are the first words they ever address directly to Medea, as opposed to her Nurse—since they (as women) believe at this point that Medea is acting rightly:

δράσω τάδ'· ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτείσῃ πόσιν,
Μήδεια. πενθεῖν δ' οὔ σε θαυμάζω τύχας.

CHORUS: I will do so. For you will punish your husband with justice,
Medea, and I am not surprised that you grieve at (your) misfortunes.
Medea 267–268

Even though the Corinthian women do not swear by a deity (as Aegeus is later compelled to swear), nonetheless they keep their promise of silence as if they had sworn a formal oath. Judith Fletcher, in her study of oaths in Euripides, summarises this phenomenon:

> To criticize the Chorus' vow of silence for its notional artificiality is to miss its perfect relevance, not only in a sequence of commissive speech acts, but also as an argument against charges of "faithlessness." [...] The Chorus had only to say, "I will do so" (*drasô*), to submit to her binding power. As promised, this story, set in motion by a woman's control of language, demonstrates that women honor their pledges.[3]

As soon as the chorus women give their pledge, Creon—a kind of 'male intruder'—interrupts their conversation. The women announce his arrival, but do not speak to him. They withdraw into spectatorship as Creon threatens to banish Medea, and she convinces him to allow her to remain for the one fatal day. Again the chorus women make no contact with the departing Creon, nor he with them. Then the chorus women briefly ask Medea in anapests some sympathetic questions: where will she turn? Where will she go? What can she do? A god has cast her into a sea of troubles (357–363). Medea's subsequent monologue outlining her plans to kill Creon, his daughter, and Jason, is quite chilling, especially when she summarizes with a statement on her own sex: that women are *kakôn pantôn tektones sophôtatai* ("the wisest contrivers of all evils," 409). Yet even after this, the chorus women are in full support of their heroine and proceed to sing their famous ode (410–445); written from the point of view of women, the ode sings of *men* as the deceitful sex, as the ones who break their oaths.

ἀνδράσι μὲν δόλιαι βουλαί, θεῶν δ'
οὐκέτι πίστις ἄραρεν.
τὰν δ' ἐμὰν εὔκλειαν ἔχειν βιοτὰν στρέψουσι φᾶμαι·
ἔρχεται τιμὰ γυναικείῳ γένει·
οὐκέτι δυσκέλαδος φάμα γυναῖκας ἕξει.

[3] Fletcher (2003), 35–36.

μοῦσαι δὲ παλαιγενέων λήξουσ' ἀοιδῶν
τὰν ἐμὰν ὑμνεῦσαι ἀπιστοσύναν.
οὐ γὰρ ἐν ἁμετέρᾳ γνώμᾳ λύρας
ὤπασε θέσπιν ἀοιδὰν
Φοῖβος ἁγήτωρ μελέων· ἐπεὶ ἀντάχησ' ἂν ὕμνον
ἀρσένων γέννᾳ. μακρὸς δ' αἰὼν ἔχει
πολλὰ μὲν ἁμετέραν ἀνδρῶν τε μοῖραν εἰπεῖν.

CHORUS: (singing) *To men belong guileful plans, and*
their vow by the gods no longer stands secure.
And their tales will twist my life around so that it has good repute;
Honor comes to the female race;
no longer will evil-sounding fame possess women.
Muses of singers born long ago will cease
to sing of my untrustworthiness.
For not unto our understanding
did Phoebus the lord of music
bestow the inspired song of the lyre,
or I would have echoed back a song
to the race of men. And long years have
much to say, not just of our lot, but also of men's. *Medea* 412–430

Given the tendency for all instances of female wrong-doing to be generalized by men, the chorus women hope that by catching Jason as a wrong-doer, they can change the songs (*hymnoi*) and tales (*phamai*) that are sung about them. There is, however, a sinister subtext to their ode. Given Medea's immediately preceding dialogue and the eventual outcome of the drama, Medea is hardly an appropriate model to give women a new, fair reputation (*eukleia*). The irony of the chorus' statements is surely apparent. The women of Corinth agreed moments before to keep silent any plans Medea may make because they feel she is right to pay her husband back (267). They have just witnessed the scene with Creon, in which Medea used deceit and blatant lies (such as saying that Creon was wise to make an alliance with Jason, 311) in order to win herself one more day in Corinth. The chorus women have also just heard Medea discuss how she will plan the death of her enemies; she settles on poison, which is apparently her specialty (385), and is the most deceitful method. For the chorus to sing immediately about a new type of songs that will praise and elevate women's reputations is highly disturbing. The audience cannot help but wonder if the *dyskelados phama* ("evil-sounding fame," 420) which is attached to women (e.g., Clytemnestra from the canonical *Oresteia* of 27 years earlier) will really be changed into anything like *tima gynaikeiôi genei* ("honor for the female race," 417) in this drama.

Jason is the next male intruder to come to Medea's doorstep, arriving even before the chorus can announce him. The Corinthian women once again are spectators, this time of a husband-and-wife brawl which clearly demonstrates how each partner thinks he or she is owed something by the other. When the chorus women do speak, they are hostile to Jason, telling him plainly that he is acting unjustly (576–578). In the stasimon (627–662) which follows his departure, the women remain allied with Medea by reflecting on the ruinous power of excess love (such as the one that has destroyed Medea), and on the importance of one's native country (which, by implication, Medea has lost).

But the plot takes a twist with the unannounced arrival of the Athenian king Aegeus, the new player in the intrigue, and a third male intruder, whom Medea persuades to offer her sanctuary in Athens if she can leave Corinth safely. Yet again the chorus women do not interrupt their conversation, but they do bid Aegeus an auspicious farewell in anapests (759–762). Immediately the stage resounds with conflicting female voices as Medea announces her plan to kill Jason's bride, and then to kill her own children. The Corinthian women have sworn to keep silent everything she does, but they beg her to reconsider, for they relate to her as women, and know that if she kills her own offspring, she will become the most miserable woman:

ΧΟ. ἐπείπερ ἡμῖν τόνδ' ἐκοίνωσας λόγον
 σέ τ' ὠφελεῖν θέλουσα καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν
 ξυλλαμβάνουσα δρᾶν σ' ἀπεννέπω τάδε.
ΜΗ. οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλως· σοὶ δὲ συγγνώμη λέγειν
 τάδ' ἐστί, μὴ πάσχουσαν, ὡς ἐγώ, κακῶς.
ΧΟ. ἀλλὰ κτανεῖν σὸν σπέρμα τολμήσεις, γύναι;
ΜΗ. οὕτω γὰρ ἂν μάλιστα δηχθείη πόσις.
ΧΟ. σὺ δ' ἂν γένοιό γ' ἀθλιωτάτη γυνή.

CHORUS: Since you have shared this plan with us,
 I—willing to help you, and upholding the laws of mortals—
 I urge you not to do these things.
MEDEA: It can't be otherwise; but these things are excusable for you to say,
 since you have not suffered badly like me.
CHORUS: But will you dare to kill your own offspring, woman?
MEDEA: Yes, for thus my husband would be stung most.
CHORUS: And you would become the most miserable woman.

Medea 811–818

The exchange is a shocking one. Medea argues at 815 that the women of Corinth don't know what it's like for her, since they have not shared her experiences; and yet Medea had gained their sympathy at the

beginning by appealing to their shared experiences as women in a Greek world. The women of Corinth state the obvious—Medea will kill her own offspring (*sperma*, 816)—to remind her of the universal feelings that all women (including the chorus) share for their children. Medea's response (that Jason will be stung the most) shows how obsessed she is solely with vengeance on him (817). The chorus' reminder that Medea will become the most miserable woman is a final appeal to the universal experience that all women share, despite the specific injuries which Medea believes single her out. Medea's next action is to put the limits of female solidarity to the test by extending it to the Nurse, asking her to fetch Jason but say nothing of her plans *eiper gynê t'ephys* ("since you were also born a woman," 823). But of course, if the Nurse has been observing everything and knows Medea's full intent—that the children's lives are in danger—how can "being a woman" safely imply agreeing to a deceptive silence which will lead to the death of the innocent children, even if it does punish Jason?

The Nurse is not given the opportunity to respond to Medea, but the chorus women are. In their stasimon, the Corinthian women reflect on the act of the murder itself, imagining the situation as they, as mothers, would understand; no mother would be able hold back tears if she looked upon a child and intended to kill it, if the child fell down and begged her to relent (855–865). They still relate to Medea as woman to woman, recognizing shared experiences; only now, those same experiences makes them less sympathetic. Events become more terrifying as Medea feigns reconciliation with Jason, then deliberates over the murder of the children. The Corinthian women's next choral moment, recited in anapests, begins with a return to the themes of their first stasimon:

> ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἔστιν μοῦσα καὶ ἡμῖν,
> ἣ προσομιλεῖ σοφίας ἕνεκεν,
> πάσαισι μὲν οὔ, παῦρον δὲ γένος
> (⟨μίαν⟩ ἐν πολλαῖς εὕροις ἂν ἴσως)
> οὐκ ἀπόμουσον τὸ γυναικῶν.

> CHORUS: But we have a muse, too,
> who associates with us so we can obtain wisdom—
> not all women, but small clan
> (perhaps you might find ⟨one woman⟩ among many)
> of the race of women is not without a muse. *Medea* 1085–1089

Things have changed since their first stasimon, when the women of Corinth imagined that Medea was the catalyst for a new era in which

men's faithlessness, rather than women's, would be the topic of song, and men's stories would—for a change—give women a good reputation. It was men (especially singers of old) who had Muses to inspire songs of women's unfaithfulness. The women of Corinth sang, *antachês' an* ("I would have echoed back," 427) men's tales of the opposite sex—if only Phoebus Apollo had given women the ability to write poetry. Such an 'echoing back' presupposes a universal women's experience that had something to say in response to men. But now, the women of Corinth have expanded, and at the same time serious limited, their understanding of women's experiences. They say that women (as well as men) have a muse, an inspiration—but they undercut this by adding that such a muse exists only for a few women, even as few as one woman among many. The immediate context is their opinion that childless people are happier than those with children—a sentiment which, admittedly, not every person (maybe even only one among many) would agree with. But what has happened to the chorus' understanding of women as a *genos* ("race," 417) that has much to 'echo back' to the *arsenôn genna* ("race of men," 428)? Why is it only a few women who have a muse who brings them wisdom? The chorus has learned a harsh lesson in the last few scenes: not all women think alike, and the woman who convinced them of the existence of a female solidarity—Medea—has just persuaded herself to slay her own sons, a horror that none of the women of Corinth could imagine herself doing. In their musings about why the childless are happier (1090–1115), they focus on the everyday worries of parents—how to raise children and provide for them, whether children will turn out good (*chrêstoi*) or bad (*phlauroi*)—and on the extraordinary loss of children who have actually turned out good (*chrêstoi*) but have been taken by death to Hades. They wonder at the grief (*lypê*, 1113) that a parent feels when a child dies—an implication that the women's sympathies are drifting towards Jason. They know that Medea will suffer the grief too, but what is left unsaid is the horrifying reality that Medea chooses to endure such grief in order to punish Jason more. Indeed, at the play's end, Jason will remind Medea that she herself also grieves (*lypêi*) at the children's death (1361), and Medea will say he is right (*saph' isthi*); yet her pain (*algos*) is worthwhile as long as Jason cannot mock her (1362). One wonders whether Medea belongs to that small selection of women which is *ouk apomouson* ("not without a muse," 1089); if so, the play quickly brings to fulfilment all the deadly inspirations that Medea receives from her vengeful muse.

The chorus watches as Medea listens to the messenger report the incendiary demise of Creon and his daughter (1136–1223), and as she then goes into the inner parts of the house to commit the most dire of crimes and become the most wretched of women. The chorus is horrified and speaks again as mothers, unable to understand how any mother could kill the child she bore (1280ff.). At the crucial moment of the infanticide, the female solidarity which Medea established in the beginning dissolves; the chorus can no longer empathize with Medea, but only pity her. What is worse, by agreeing to keep any and all of her plans secret, the chorus has allowed the unthinkable to happen. The women permitted themselves to sympathize with Medea's situation and agreed that she had the right to take vengeance on her husband, without first having considered the type of woman Medea was. In this, the internal audience that is the chorus (and, one might add, the external audience of the theater) must find itself ethically compromised by—and morally implicated in—Medea's crime. The women had identified with Medea's position and therefore thought they were keeping her secret in their own interest, but part of the disorder of this tragedy is that female solidarity backfires.

Medea proves that the "race of women" is not as homogeneous as she had repeatedly thought. Rather, she has lived up to her own definition of woman as bloody avenger, while the Corinthian women have recognized the limits of their own conceptualization of female capabilities. The dreadful outcome of this drama now provides a rereading of the earlier stasimon which sang women's praises. The whole notion of reversing the world's order (411) and making things better for women is impossible. If Medea was the inspiration for the chorus' dreams, the ending of the play exposes their hopelessness. The chorus had thought the muses of the ancient singers would cease telling the tales of women's untrustworthiness (421–423). Why? Because they are not true? Because men's untrustworthiness outweighs that of women? The play seems to prove that this is not the case. Medea's murder of her children is far worse than Jason's initial unfaithfulness; not even the chorus itself can condone Medea's actions. And if a poet could choose a story to sing about, which would be more memorable, Jason's infidelity or Medea's revenge? Obviously the latter. It is a dark revelation that women can never escape *dyskelados phama* ("evil-sounding fame," 420). The play thus becomes a tragedy not just of Medea, but of all Greek women. The message seems to be that with women such as Medea to inspire solidarity, Greek women will never escape the stereotypes of

deceit, unfaithfulness, and destructive cleverness with which they are forever entwined.

b. Hippolytus

Hippolytus uses a 'silent' female chorus to similar ends. The women of Troezen sympathize with Phaedra's illness, hear her confession of incestuous passion for her stepson Hippolytus, and witness the disastrous results of the Nurse's attempts to reveal that passion to the boy himself. When Hippolytus rushes off the stage after his tirade against women, Phaedra is fearful that Hippolytus (despite his promise of secrecy) will go to his father Theseus (Phaedra's husband), reveal the secret of her passion, and even tell his grandfather Pittheus, the ruler of Troezen (659–691). As a result, the whole land would know the scandal of her desire (692). The Nurse tries to make amends, but Phaedra sends her away with curses, and immediately asks the chorus:

> ὑμεῖς δέ, παῖδες εὐγενεῖς Τροζήνιαι,
> τοσόνδε μοι παράσχετ' ἐξαιτουμένῃ·
> σιγῇ καλύψαθ' ἁνθάδ' εἰσηκούσατε.

> PHAEDRA: But you, noble daughters of Troezen,
> grant this one thing to who me asks it:
> in silence wrap what you have heard here. *Hippolytus* 710–712[4]

Though Phaedra has made no mention of how she intends to remedy her situation, the chorus women unquestioningly acquiesce and swear by Artemis not to bring to light any of Phaedra's troubles:

> ὄμνυμι σεμνὴν Ἄρτεμιν, Διὸς κόρην,
> μηδὲν κακῶν σῶν ἐς φάος δείξειν ποτέ.

> CHORUS: I swear by holy Artemis, daughter of Zeus,
> that I will never reveal any of your misfortunes to the light.
> *Hippolytus* 713–714

Only then does Phaedra explain what she will do next to insure the good reputation she can pass on to her children; she will die. She does not allow the chorus to voice any objections longer than one-half line,

[4] A fragment of Sophocles' *Phaedra* seems to indicate that his Phaedra also asked her chorus for silence: σύγγνωτε κἀνάσχεσθε σιγῶσαι· τὸ γὰρ / γυναιξὶν αἰσχρὸν σὺν γυναῖκα δεῖ στέγειν ("Be sympathetic and maintain silence; for a woman should cover up what brings shame on women," fr. 679, Lloyd-Jones). For a text critical history of this passage, see Radt (1977), vol. 4, 476. This passage may beg for solidarity against men's generalizations of women's offences.

euphêmos isthi, which can be translated both as "speak no ill words!" and "observe silence!" (724) before going into the house to kill herself. The women of Troezen sing their famous escapist ode, wishing they could fly away like birds, but the gravity of the situation keeps them focused on reality, and they describe with chilling detail, as if they could see it, Phaedra's hanging within the house (768–770).

True to their promise, the women of Troezen tell a deliberate lie to Theseus just moments after he has returned home to find his house in mourning. The women inform him that it is Phaedra, and not one of his children, who is dead (800), and that she hanged herself (802). But when asked why she committed suicide, the women respond with blatant falsehood:

> τοσοῦτον ἴσμεν· ἄρτι γὰρ κἀγὼ δόμους,
> Θησεῦ, πάρειμι σῶν κακῶν πενθήτρια.
>
> CHORUS: I know this much; for I myself have only just come to the house,
> Theseus, as a mourner for your troubles. *Hippolytus* 804–805

When Phaedra's lifeless corpse is rolled out on stage five lines later, the women of Troezen mourn her death, but continue the pretence of ignorance. They ask, "Unfortunate woman, who could have cast a shadow on your life?" (816). On the immediate level, they (and the audience) know it was Hippolytus; on the broader level, the audience remembers it was Aphrodite.

As in *Medea*, events take a sudden twist in such a way as to test the chorus' conscience. No sooner does Theseus finish mourning his wife than he finds the tablet in her hand and rages (still in lyrics) at its contents. Even before they know what it says, the women of Troezen can sense it means trouble (873 and 881). It is then that Theseus announces (addressing the whole city, in fact) that Hippolytus has raped Phaedra. Without delay, he calls upon Poseidon to kill his son. This is surely unexpected news for the women of Troezen. If the play had stopped with Phaedra's death, they would have been content to keep her desires for her stepson a secret forever; but now, Phaedra has gone a step further, and accused Hippolytus of a rape he did not commit, and which the chorus women are now bound by oath never to refute. They beg Theseus to call back his curses, lest he regret it another day (892). When Hippolytus himself comes on the scene, the women tell Theseus to give up his terrible anger, but to no avail.

The chorus has very little part in the argument between father and son, except to show some sympathy to Hippolytus. He swears by Zeus

that he did not rape Phaedra (1025 ff.), and at the same time tells his own lie to protect Phaedra's reputation. He had sworn to the Nurse not to reveal the secret of Phaedra's passion; now he keeps that promise by saying he does not know the precise reason why Phaedra would kill herself:

> οὐκ οἶδ', ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις πέρα λέγειν.
>
> HIPPOLYTUS: I do not know; it is not right for me to speak further.
>
> *Hippolytus* 1033

The chorus women respond to this with what sympathy they can afford:

> ἀρκοῦσαν εἶπας αἰτίας ἀποστροφὴν
> ὅρκους παρασχών, πίστιν οὐ σμικράν, θεῶν.
>
> CHORUS: You have spoken a sufficient rebuttal of the charge
> by taking an oath—not a small assurance—by the gods.
>
> *Hippolytus* 1036–1037

Thus the chorus hints to the oath he had made to the Nurse, but cannot refer to it explicitly.

Theseus and Hippolytus effectively ignore the chorus during their *agôn*, and when Theseus banishes his son from the land, the women of Troezen can do nothing to stop it. Their ode upon Hippolytus' departure is one of scepticism in a benevolent god.[5] They go so far as to say they are angry with the gods (1146) and ask the Graces why they have allowed a man they know is guiltless (*ouden atas aition*, 1149) to be banished. Whatever sympathy they had with Phaedra at the start of the drama is now overturned by their complicity in the exile of an innocent man.

Finally, the grisly death of Hippolytus is reported, and the chorus responds with a brief ode to the bewitching power of love, effectively

[5] There is some debate as to whether the third stasimon is sung by the chorus of women from Troezen, or whether it is a duet between that chorus and a smaller chorus of male attendants to Hippolytus. The argument revolves around the use of the masculine singular participle to refer to the first person speakers of lines 1111, 1118, and 1121. Verrall, Murray, Maas, and Diggle have posited a male chorus for the strophes, while the main female chorus sings the antistrophes. Verrall identified the male chorus as the attendants of Hippolytus who appeared on stage at line 61; Diggle concurs. Maas (1920), 305 suggested the chorus was comprised of male citizens who replied to Theseus' call to the *polis* at 884. Barrett (1964) does not print a distinction between speakers of the stasimon; and for several translators (including David Grene) the third stasimon belongs entirely to the women of Troezen. In any event, lines 1146 and 1149 mentioned here are by all accounts spoken by the female chorus.

reminding themselves and the audience that it was Phaedra's incestuous desires which brought the household to ruin. At the very last, Artemis *ex machina* reveals the secret that both Hippolytus and the chorus had sworn to keep; Phaedra had been seized with frenzied love for her stepson, and that it was for this—not rape—that she killed herself. Of course, it is too late; the women of Troezen and the young prince had kept secrets at the wrong time.

The women of Troezen do not internalize their complicity in Hippolytus' death as explicitly as the Corinthian women of *Medea*. This is partly because there was no real possibility that the chorus could interfere; Theseus uttered his curse immediately upon reading Phaedra's tablet, so that even if the chorus had eventually spoken to Theseus, his curse could not have been retracted. In addition, though the two plays are very similar in their representation of the destructive female, Euripides tries to vindicate Phaedra as he did not Medea. Artemis describes Phaedra's lust as a kind of nobility (*tina gennaiotêta*) in lines 1300–1301, since Phaedra was the victim of Aphrodite and fought against her valiantly. Even so, such an explanation is not very comforting when translated to the real world. An ancient Athenian audience might have concurred that goddesses exist physically in the universe of myth, but could women's lusts—and their schemes to conceal them—be blamed on the gods in real life? Surely not. The *dea ex machina* here seems added to make even the myth acceptable. Furthermore, can the chorus escape from blame for allowing Hippolytus to be banished, even if it turns out it was the plan of Aphrodite? In this respect, the ending of *Hippolytus* is even more dire than *Medea*. In the earlier play, the chorus and the audience could at least accept that they had been duped into sympathizing for Medea, and then face the guilt associated with allowing her to murder her children. But in *Hippolytus*, the resolution is disturbingly open. The intervention of Artemis explains everything away too easily—it was all the gods' doing—and such easy answers to the death of an innocent man (and the suicide of a frightened woman) never rest easily on an intelligent audience.

c. Iphigenia in Tauris

Iphigenia in Tauris, separated from *Hippolytus* by about fifteen years, utilizes a silent female chorus for different ends. Identified as fellow Greek captives (*dmôai*, 143) who serve with Iphigenia in Artemis' temple in the land of the Taurians, the maidens of the chorus of *Iphigenia*

in Tauris demonstrate their loyalty to their mistress by promising to conceal her plot to escape. Furthermore, they tell blatant lies, are implicated in the escape plot, and are threatened with death, yet are finally promised a return home by the *dea ex machina*.

Iphigenia is reunited with her brother Orestes and his friend (and cousin, and brother-in-law) Pylades; before they can return to Greece, the men must steal Artemis' image from her temple and bring it to Delphi so Orestes can be purified of those of his mother's Furies who still pursue him. As Iphigenia contrives a scheme by which Artemis' image will be brought to the seashore, Orestes reminds her that the chorus might be important allies, and that she as a woman has the power to elicit their compassion (1052–1054). Accordingly, as in *Medea* nearly twenty years earlier, the heroine appeals to the chorus of maidens as a woman to women:

καὶ πρῶτα μέν μοι τοῦ λόγου τάδ' ἀρχέτω·
γυναῖκές ἐσμεν, φιλόφρον ἀλλήλαις γένος
σῴζειν τε κοινὰ πράγματ' ἀσφαλέσταται.
σιγήσαθ' ἡμῖν καὶ συνεκπονήσατε
φυγάς. καλόν τοι γλῶσσ' ὅτῳ πιστὴ παρῇ.

IPHIGENIA: And let this be the beginning of my argument:
We are women, a race sympathetic to each other,
And most steadfast to protect common interests.
Keep silent, and help us achieve
escape; a trustworthy tongue is a good thing for whoever has one.
Iphigenia in Tauris 1060–1064

In *Medea* and *Hippolytus*, such an appeal to female solidarity was all that was necessary to persuade a chorus; here as well, Iphigenia attempts to convince the temple maidens that their interests coincide with hers. However, she adds a not-so-subtle bribe; if she is saved, she will do her best to save the temple maidens and return them to Greece (1067–1068). As a final strategy, she falls as a suppliant, begging these female slaves by their mothers, fathers, and all that is dear in their houses, to consent to her plea (1069ff.). The chorus women give their consent as quickly as most choruses do; within three short lines, they swear by a god (here it is Zeus) to do exactly what the heroine has requested, which is to keep silence:

θάρσει, φίλη δέσποινα, καὶ σῷζου μόνον·
ὡς ἔκ γ' ἐμοῦ σοι πάντα σιγηθήσεται
(ἴστω μέγας Ζεύς) ὧν ἐπισκήπτεις πέρι.

CHORUS: Have courage, dear mistress, and see to yourself alone,
since everything will be kept silent by me
(let great Zeus know it!), everything you charge me with.
Iphigenia in Tauris 1075–1077

The heroine gives the chorus brief thanks, then turns her attention to the matter at hand. Orestes and Pylades enter the temple, and after a brief prayer to Artemis, Iphigenia follows after them, preparing for the deception to come. The temple maidens, having been promised a possible return home in exchange for their silence, sing an ode of sorrow for their lost families in Greece (1089–1152).

The deception of Thoas goes well (1153–1233), and events off-stage are presumed to be successful while the maidens sing an ode to Apollo (1234–1283). That changes when a messenger rushes to the temple doors at line 1284 and demands that the temple guards summon Thoas. The chorus asks what is the matter; the messenger replies that Orestes and Pylades are loose and in flight in a ship, and that they have Artemis' image with them (1288–1292). The temple maidens feign innocence, saying his story is incredible (*apiston*, 1293). The messenger asks where king Thoas can be found; when the women say they have no idea, the messenger actually accuses them of lying, echoing the word *apiston* in its other meaning:

ὁρᾶτ' ἄπιστον ὡς γυναικεῖον γένος·
μέτεστι χὐμῖν τῶν πεπραγμένων μέρος.

MESSENGER: See how untrustworthy is the race of women!
You too have some part in the conspiracy! *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1298–1299

The women pretend ignorance again, saying the messenger is crazy, and ask rhetorically what the escape of the foreigners could possibly have to do with them (1300). They suggest he go to the palace gates, but the messenger says he would rather wait for someone from inside the temple to tell him the whereabouts of the king. No sooner does he pound on the door again than Thoas himself appears. The messenger is furious at the chorus, and informs Thoas:

†ψευδῶς ἔλεγον αἵδε καί μ'† ἀπήλαυνον δόμων,
ὡς ἐκτὸς εἴης· σὺ δὲ κατ' οἶκον ἦσθ' ἄρα.

MESSENGER: †These women lied and† kept me off from the building,
Saying you were gone. But you were in the building all along!
Iphigenia in Tauris 1309–1310

The king, too, is puzzled about what the women expected to gain by saying that (1311), but the messenger prefers to talk about the women

later, and instead relates the news of Iphigenia's near escape. Things look very badly for Iphigenia and her crew. The messenger reports that even after she and Orestes had managed to commandeer the ship and sail off with the statue of Artemis, her ship was being forced back to the rocks (1406). Confident that Poseidon will deliver the children of Agamemnon into Thoas' clutches (1415 ff.), the messenger departs. The chorus, horrified, is certain that Iphigenia and her brother will be brought back into their master's hands to die (1420–1421). Thoas orders some sailors to capture the Greek ship, then turns his anger against the chorus. There is no doubt now in his mind that the temple maidens were aware of Iphigenia's plans (1431), and he promises to punish them later for their implication in the plot. Suddenly, before the chorus can react, the goddess Athena appears *ex machina* to stop Thoas from his pursuit. In a gesture unique to this play, the goddess pronounces the fate of the chorus, ordering Thoas to release the Greek maidens from his country and send them home, specifically because of their just intent (*gnômês dikaias hounek'*, 1469). Thoas promises to do this in 1484, and the women bring the play to a close with their praise to Athena because they have now heard a joy beyond all their hope.

In this play, then, the chorus benefits from allying itself with the right woman, for keeping her plans secret, and for deliberately misdirecting those who would interfere with those plans. Furthermore, an audience is in full support of this 'positive' type of deceit against a barbarian foe. The women are still motivated by female solidarity, but unlike the earlier *Medea* and *Hippolytus*, this solidarity is only one of several ploys used to persuade them. The promise of a return to Greece is infinitely more pressing, and in the end, they get exactly what they bargained for.

d. Helen

Like *Iphigenia in Tauris*, the chorus of *Helen* (with which *Iphigenia in Tauris* is endlessly compared) appears to benefit from its agreement to keep silent Helen's plans for escape from Egypt. However, in this play, Euripides employs female choral silence with the barest of motivations, as if only to satisfy a dramatic convention of his own making; with ingenious invention, he transfers the convention of female silent complicity to a secondary female character, Theonoe (to be discussed later).

The chorus of Greek captive women (whom Helen addresses as *thêrama barbarou platas, Hellanides korai*, "spoils of a barbarian oar, Greek maidens," 191–192) has a spare role in helping Helen's plot succeed.

Her plea for silence reminds the women that their interests coincide with hers; when she sees Theoclymenus approaching from the palace in the presumption that he is free to marry her, she tells them they must "guard their tongue" (*kratein stomatos*) if she and Menelaus will ever be able to escape and return to save them (1388–1389). Significantly, the chorus women make no response before Theoclymenus re-enters. They have no need; Theonoe has already usurped their role as the token secret-keeping female. There is a brief exchange between Theoclymenus, Helen and Menelaus before the latter leave for the seashore and the Greek women begin their stasimon (1451–1511). They sing of Helen's journey through the sea back towards Greece, and her joy at being reunited with her brothers' wives and her unwed daughter. Even though the women wish they could fly like birds and gaze down at the land below, conspicuously absent from the ode is any mention of the singers themselves reaching their homeland, as one might expect; instead they are nostalgic for the places in Greece which Helen (and the migrating birds) will eventually see. The choral song focuses solely on Helen's experience; the concept that these women might one day share in a similar escape from Egypt is never expressed.

The end of the play follows closely the pattern of the ending of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, as has often been noticed. The role of the female chorus, however, is strikingly different. When a messenger arrives to tell Theoclymenus of Helen's deception, there is no interaction with the chorus. Theoclymenus enters from the palace at precisely the same moment as the messenger from off-stage; within four lines, it is announced that Helen has left Egypt. Finally, having heard all the details of Helen's flight at sea, the Greek women do what is expected of them and feign ignorance, saying they would never have dreamt Menelaus could have been in Egypt unknown to them (1619–1620). Then, at the analogous point where Thoas in *Iphigenia in Tauris* vowed to punish the chorus for their complicity, Theoclymenus in *Helen* (suddenly speaking in trochaic tetrameters) prepares to kill the primary female secret keeper in this play: his own sister, Theonoe (1621 ff.).[6] There is some debate as to the

[6] Dale (1967), 165 ad 1621–1641 comments, "The short interlude of tetrameters marks the headlong violence of the onset of the king's anger, and gives the opportunity for one of those balancing interchanges (for which the trimeter had less room and less symmetry) as the struggle sways evenly backward and forward." Trochaic tetrameter apparently is better suited for *antilabe* than trimeter. *Iphigenia in Tauris* also has a trochaic tetrameter section in *antilabe* at 1203–1220, in the final stages of Iphigenia's deception of Thoas.

identity of the person who at this point, in anxious *antilabe* (1627–1641), tries to stop him:

ΧΟ. οὐκ ἀφήσομαι πέπλων σῶν· μεγάλα ⟨γὰρ⟩ σπεύδεις κακά.
ΘΕ. ἀλλὰ δεσποτῶν κρατήσεις δοῦλος ὤν; ΧΟ. φρονῶ γὰρ εὖ.
ΘΕ. οὐκ ἔμοιγ', εἰ μή μ' ἐάσεις ... ΧΟ. οὐ μὲν οὖν σ' ἐάσομεν.
ΘΕ. σύγγονον κτανεῖν κακίστην ... ΧΟ. εὐσεβεστάτην μὲν οὖν.
ΘΕ. ἥ με προύδωκεν ... ΧΟ. καλήν γε προδοσίαν, δίκαια δρᾶν.

CHORUS: I will not let go of your robes, for you are rushing into great wickedness.
THEOCLYMENUS: Will you rule your masters, though being a slave?
CHORUS: Yes, for I'm in my right mind.
THEOCLYMENUS: Not as far as I'm concerned, unless you will allow me—
CHORUS: No, we will not allow you!
THEOCLYMENUS:—to kill my most wicked sister—
CHORUS: No, she is most pious.
THEOCLYMENUS:—who betrayed me—
CHORUS: A noble betrayal to be sure, a just thing to do.

Helen 1629–1633

The manuscripts attribute the lines to the chorus, which was supported by Dale; indeed, the first person plural is used at 1631b and 1640. Diggle (following Clark) proposes the entrance of a second servant, given that the speaker is addressed δοῦλος ὤν (1630) with a masculine singular participle. Others (such as Dale) argue that this is a rare instance of the masculine participle used as a collective singular for a group of women. Wecklein emends the text to omit ὤν. If one takes the lines as spoken by the chorus, it gives the women a prominence they hitherto had not possessed. Suddenly at the end of the play are they ready to die to protect Theonoe from murder?

ΘΕ. κατθανεῖν ἐρᾶν ἔοικας. ΧΟ. κτεῖνε· σύγγονον δὲ σὴν
οὐ κτενεῖς ἡμῶν ἑκόντων ἀλλ' ἔμ'· ὡς πρὸ δεσποτῶν
τοῖσι γενναίοισι δούλοις εὐκλεέστατον θανεῖν.

THEOCLYMENUS: You seem in love with dying. CHORUS: Kill me; but you shall not kill your sister against our will, but me instead; since to die for one's masters is the most glorious thing for noble slaves.

Helen 1639–1641

Some might argue that the supposition of a servant would maintain the marginalized role of the chorus which has prevailed throughout the drama; but such an argument ignores that the chorus of *Helen* has already once demonstrated its capacity for unusual action, by leaving the stage with the protagonist early in the play (385). If it is the chorus women who intervene at the end, their actions flesh out their character-

ization as individuals who collectively show solidarity as women. They demonstrate their loyalty to Theonoe through their willingness to die for her; this brings the events of the play full circle, since at the drama's start it was the chorus whose argument for female solidarity convinced Helen to leave Proteus' tomb (and leave the stage!) to consult Theonoe:

> θέλω δὲ κἀγώ σοι συνεισελθεῖν δόμους
> καὶ συμπυθέσθαι παρθένου θεσπίσματα·
> γυναῖκα γὰρ δὴ συμπονεῖν γυναικὶ χρή.

> CHORUS: And I too am willing to enter the house with you
> and together ask the maiden for her predictions;
> for it is right for a woman to help out a woman. *Helen* 327–329

The chorus' statement that women should *symponein* (literally "suffer with") other women points both to the chorus' solidarity with Helen (let us not forget that the chorus' first arrival in this play, 179 ff., was out of concern that Helen's cries sounded like she was being raped), and to the solidarity they assume Theonoe will naturally have as well. Indeed, Theonoe does become a fellow secret-keeper in this play (albeit for motives to be discussed later); and if it is the chorus women who rush forward to maintain Theonoe's safety and justify her motives, by doing so they justify their own motives for secret-keeping.

In the end, the Dioscuri appear *ex machina* and stop Theoclymenus from going in to kill his sister. There is no explicit mention of what will happen to the chorus, nor do they have anything to say except for the tag (1688 ff.) that ends this and many other plays. Nevertheless, Helen's promise to return for the chorus is at least suggestive of a happy future.

In the previous four plays, female choruses supported their heroines by keeping silent. What exactly were the secrets they were hiding? A murder plot, a false accusation of rape, an escape plot—all of them schemes contrived by women against men. In the next two plays—*Ion* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*—Euripides explored the consequences of secrets that men keep from women.

e. Ion

A nice counter-example to the trope of the silent female chorus occurs in the *Ion*. Here Creusa's female slaves that form the chorus (Ion addresses them as *dmôai* at 234) are told to keep silent by a man (Xuthus), but they break this silence precisely because of loyalty and

female solidarity. Having received Apollo's oracle, Xuthus claims Ion as his son and intends to bring him to Athens. He instructs Ion to pretend that he is not his son, but a mere tourist (*theatês*), so that Xuthus' childless wife Creusa will not be hurt (655 ff.). Knowing that the chorus has overheard all their plans, Xuthus orders them to keep quiet (*sigan*) upon penalty of death:

> ὑμῖν δὲ σιγᾶν, δμωίδες, λέγω τάδε,
> ἢ θάνατον εἰπούσαισι πρὸς δάμαρτ᾽ ἐμήν.

> XUTHUS: And you, slaves, I tell you to be silent regarding these things,
> or else death for those who tell my wife. *Ion* 666–667

But the chorus of *Ion* takes on an identity unique in Euripides' plays. This chorus of female slaves can leap to hasty conclusions; they have unabashed opinions about their king, unfailing loyalty to their mistress, and an instantaneous hatred for the young Ion. They even engage in some self-deliberation, wondering if they should proclaim clearly to the ears of their mistress the blame which is due her husband (695 ff.). All of these conflicting loyalties prepare the audience for the chorus women's surprising decision in the next episode to break their silence. When Creusa (in the company of an old male servant) asks her slaves what the oracle has said about her hope of children, they wail (*iô daimon*, 752; *iô tlamon*, 754), then ask themselves, with death set before them (756), whether they should speak or not (758)—a kind of foreshadowing of Creusa's "Should I keep silent?" a few lines later (859 ff.). Creusa tells them to speak, and the women consent, even if they should die twice over (760).

Unfortunately, the women's news is not entirely accurate. They tell their queen explicitly that she will never have a child to hold, or take one to her breast (761–762). This is *not*, however, precisely what the oracle said to Xuthus; it had only stated that the first person Xuthus would meet upon exiting the temple would be his son (534–535, which is itself not entirely true). The chorus witnessed this themselves, but made a mistake in inference and interpretation, which is typical of those who consult oracles; Xuthus himself appears to have drawn the wrong conclusions. The slave women are not stupid, nor are they deliberately passing along misinformation. Their logical conclusion in 780 that Apollo gave Xuthus a son, but that Creusa has nothing, only adds to Creusa's and her aged servant's anger.

Like the chorus of *Medea*, the chorus of *Ion* perceives that women have been wronged by men and sings a scathing ode about men's lasciviousness:

ὁρᾶθ᾽, ὅσοι δυσκελάδοι-
 σιν κατὰ μοῦσαν ἰόντες ἀείδεθ᾽ ὕμνοις
ἁμέτερα λέχεα καὶ γάμους
Κύπριδος ἀθέμιτος ἀνοσίους,
ὅσον εὐσεβίᾳ κρατοῦμεν
ἄδικον ἄροτον ἀνδρῶν.
παλίμφαμος ἀοιδὰ
καὶ μοῦσ᾽ εἰς ἄνδρας ἴτω
†δυσκέλαδος ἀμφὶ λέκτρων.
δείκνυσι γὰρ ὁ Διὸς ἐκ
παίδων† ἀμνημοσύναν,
οὐ κοινὰν τεκέων τύχαν
οἴκοισι φυτεύσας
δεσποίνᾳ· πρὸς δ᾽ Ἀφροδί-
 ταν ἄλλαν θέμενος χάριν
νόθου παιδὸς ἔκυρσεν.

CHORUS: Look, all you who,
as you travel with the muse, sing with evil-sounding songs
about our beds and unholy unions
of the lawless Cyprian goddess,
look at how much in piety we prevail over
the unjust breeding of men.
Let a reversing song
and muse go against men,
†evil-sounding about their beds.
For the descendant of Zeus' children
reveals† his forgetfulness,
by not producing the shared good fortune
of children in the house
for our mistress; rather, gratifying Aphrodite
with another woman,
he got a bastard son. *Ion* 1090–1100

The women even repeat some of the words used in the first stasimon of *Medea: dyskelados* ("evil-sounding") in the opening line, and a combination of *phama* and *palin (palimphamos, Ion* 1096), signifying reputation being reversed. Furthermore, what is *palimphamos* is an *aoida* ("song") and a *mousa* that can proceed against men. Given that everyone is under the false assumption that Ion is Xuthus' bastard, there is somewhat more justification in *Ion* for these sentiments than in *Medea.* However, the dramatic context of the *Ion* ode is strikingly parallel to that of the *Medea* passage—the slave women of *Ion* express their sentiments while their mistress has gone off to plot her rival's death.

When the messenger arrives trying to find Creusa to warn her that her plot has failed, the women fear their own implication and are cer-

tain they will face a death by stoning (*Ion* 1238–1242). Their silence about Creusa's murder plot is part of their complicity, which convinces them of their guilt. It is also the women who suggest (in trochaic tetrameters) that Creusa take refuge at the altar, an act of supplication they would surely do themselves if they could (1255–1260). These are the last lines of any import that the chorus women utter. They make not a squeak while Ion threatens Creusa at the altar, or when the Pythia arrives with the box containing Ion's baby clothes, and they are silent during the recognition duet. Only at 1510–1511, when Creusa has finished singing, do the chorus women make the bland remark that no one should presume that nothing is unexpected. They say nothing during Athena's appearance *ex machina*, but nonetheless give the closing lines of the play (in trochaic tetrameters), which might sound somewhat ironic:

> ὦ Διὸς Λητοῦς τ' Ἄπολλον, χαῖρ'· ὅτῳ δ' ἐλαύνεται
> συμφοραῖς οἶκος, σέβοντα δαίμονας θαρσεῖν χρεών·
> ἐς τέλος γὰρ οἱ μὲν ἐσθλοὶ τυγχάνουσιν ἀξίων,
> οἱ κακοὶ δ', ὥσπερ πεφύκασ', οὔποτ' εὖ πράξειαν ἄν.

> CHORUS: Oh Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto, farewell. He whose house is struck
> by misfortunes, ought to bear up as he honors the gods;
> for in the end, the good get what they deserve,
> but the bad, as is their nature, would never fare well. *Ion* 1619–1622

The irony, of course, is the play's open question: were Creusa's actions (poisoning a potential stepson!) those of *hoi esthloi*, or *hoi kakoi?* Do the chorus women, who supported the murder plot, get what they deserve? Perhaps, perhaps not; but for one fleeting moment, the female solidarity exercised by the chorus women puts them in mortal danger.

f. Iphigenia in Aulis

The other play in which a man orders a chorus of women to silence is *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Unlike *Ion*, in *Iphigenia in Aulis* the man's order is obeyed. As in *Ion*, the chorus women are sight-seers; but instead of being slaves to an Athenian mistress, these women are wives who live in nearby Chalcis, across the Euripus straight opposite the bay of Aulis. Their *parodos* (164–302) is an extensive description of all the famous Greek soldiers they have gazed upon—the two Ajaxes, Diomedes, Odysseus, Achilles, Nestor, and even a contingent from Athens led by Theseus' son. Like groupies chasing after celebrities, the women admit that their cheeks blushed, as though "with the shame of a girl" (*aischynâi*

neothalei, 188), as they ran through Artemis' grove in their desire to see the shields, tents, and horses of the Greeks. They are unabashed about the pleasure (*hadonan*) they get "while filling up their woman's eyes" (*tan gynaikeion opsin ommatôn hôs plêsaimi*, 233–234). They also have preconceived notions about the Greek heroes, based on what their husbands have told them (176–177) and on "the things I have heard at home" (*ta de kat' oikous klyousa*, 301); therefore the women can recite the genealogies of all the heroes they have seen, along with juicy tidbits of their history (e.g., Achilles' tutorship under Chiron, 209).

Throughout the play, the chorus women are notable for their detachment from the action. This does not mean that they have no ethical attachment; indeed, after the *agôn* when Agamemnon flatly tells Menelaus that he will not allow Iphigenia to die, the chorus women acknowledge that Agamemnon's words are now spoken rightly in arguing to spare the child (*kalôs d'echousi, pheidesthai teknôn*, 402). The chorus women are also capable of emotional attachment; when the messenger announces that Iphigenia is on her way, and Agamemnon realizes he is trapped into sacrificing her, the chorus women express genuine sympathy despite their distance in social status:

> κἀγὼ κατῴκτιρ', ὡς γυναῖκα δεῖ ξένην
> ὑπὲρ τυράννων συμφορᾶς καταστένειν.

> CHORUS: I too felt compassion, to the degree that a foreign woman can grieve for the misfortunes of kings. *Iphigenia in Aulis* 469–470

Yet their capacity for ethical and emotional attachment does not inspire these women to think of themselves as anything more than foreigners. They process most of the actions they witness in terms of their preconceived notions of the Greek soldiers as celebrities with noble ancestors. When Menelaus does a *volte face* and supports Agamemnon, even offering to disband the army, the chorus women describe his words as "noble" (*gennaia*) and "fitting" (*preponta*) for Zeus' son Tantalus, the ancestor of Menelaus and Agamemnon (504–505). But such noble designs are no longer of any use; Iphigenia has arrived, the Greek army knows it, and there are too many people (Calchas, Odysseus, the mob of the army) who will compel Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter. Agamemnon asks Menelaus to prevent Clytemnestra from learning the truth (538–541), then realizes that the chorus women have overheard his plans. Therefore—in the barest of acknowledgments that they even exist—he orders them to keep silent, addressing them significantly as *xenai*:

ὑμεῖς δὲ σιγήν, ὦ ξέναι, φυλάσσετε.

AGAMEMNON: And you, foreign women, keep (guard) silence.

Iphigenia in Aulis 542

Oddly, female solidarity does not operate in this play. The women of Chalcis obey Agamemnon, despite having earlier approved of a plan to spare his child, and despite opportunities to reveal his new plot, such as when they offer to help Clytemnestra down from her chariot (599). The women are exceedingly kind to the new female arrivals in the camp, addressing them with a mixture of wonder at their royal status (being descended from *megaloi*, 594), and generosity as fellow strangers (*xeinai*, 606) in a strange place where a young girl like Iphigenia might be afraid (*tarbêseî*, 602):

ΧΟ. ἰὼ ἰώ· μεγάλαι μεγάλων
εὐδαιμονίαι· τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως
ἴδετ' Ἰφιγένειαν, ἄνασσαν ἐμήν,
τὴν Τυνδάρεω τε Κλυταιμήστραν,
ὡς ἐκ μεγάλων ἐβλαστήκασ'
ἐπί τ' εὐμήκεις ἥκουσι τύχας.
θεοί γ' οἱ κρείσσους οἵ τ' ὀλβοφόροι
τοῖς οὐκ εὐδαίμοσι θνητῶν.
στῶμεν, Χαλκίδος ἔκγονα θρέμματα,
τὴν βασίλειαν δεξώμεθ' ὄχων
ἄπο μὴ σφαλερῶς ἐπὶ γαῖαν,
ἀγανῶς δὲ χεροῖν, μαλακῇ γνώμῃ,
μὴ ταρβήσῃ νεωστί μοι μολὸν
κλεινὸν τέκνον Ἀγαμέμνονος,
μηδὲ θόρυβον μηδ' ἔκπληξιν
ταῖς Ἀργείαις
ξεῖναι ξείναις παρέχωμεν.
ΚΛ. ὄρνιθα μὲν τόνδ' αἴσιον ποιούμεθα,
τὸν σόν τε χρηστὸν καὶ λόγων εὐφημίαν.

CHORUS: (singing lyric anapests): *Iô iô! Greatest of great*
good fortunes! Behold the king's daughter
Iphigenia, my princess,
and the daughter of Tyndareus, Clytemnestra,
how they have sprouted from great persons
and have come to a great destiny.
To be sure, those who are more powerful and prosperous, are like gods
to those who are not fortunate among mortals.
Let's stay, offspring raised at Chalcis,
and let's receive the queen
lest from the chariot she fall to the ground,
and gently with our hands, with well-wishing thought,

lest she be afraid, let's receive the one who has come to us just now,
the famous child of Agamemnon,
and let us cause neither disturbance nor consternation
for the women of Argos
as fellow strangers to fellow strangers.
CLYTEMNESTRA: We consider this omen to bode well:
this kindness of yours, and your auspiciousness of speech.

Iphigenia at Aulis 591–608

But in spite of their kindness and enthusiasm for the female royalty of Argos, the chorus women do not inform them about Agamemnon's deception; if anything, they gloss over it by invoking good fortunes (*eudaimoniai*, 591) when the chariot comes in, and by singing of the great (literally, "of good length") destinies (*eumêkeis tychas*, 595) at which Iphigenia and her mother have arrived.[7] Clytemnestra unwittingly thanks them for their "auspiciousness of speech" (*logôn euphêmian*, 608), surely a play on the other possible meaning of *euphêmia* as 'silence.' When Clytemnestra asks the chorus women to help Iphigenia down, stand by the horses, and take Orestes into their arms (615–621), the women make no effort to warn them to turn around and race back home. Perhaps this does not mean that the women would not eventually break down and tell what they know; it may just happen that Clytemnestra learns the truth first. But it is more likely that the celebrity-chasing chorus women are consumers of rumor and reputation, rather than loyal fans. They have no common history with Clytemnestra or Iphigenia, nor do they want any beyond the barest acquaintance. They are so marginalized from the action that they are almost a gratuitous female chorus, in that one reason they are female is precisely women's propensity for keeping secrets. However, it is not the usual world of female secrets, but a world of male secrets that men want to hide from women. This makes *Iphigenia in Aulis* a frighteningly innovative play; female secret-keeping outweighs solidarity, and the chorus women never receive any blame for it.

The chorus women continue to express their interest in how the Greek nobility live up to their reputations; they address Achilles as "son of Peleus" and assure him that his words are "worthy" (*axia*) of the sea-goddess from whom he is descended (975–976); and they do a bit of Helen-bashing, blaming her for the troubles affecting the sons

[7] Of course, it might be that none of the lines is genuine. Diggle (1994) marks lines 591–597 as "vix Euripidei" and 598–606 as "non Euripidei."

of Atreus and their children (1253–1254). The chorus women's ethical stance, although rarely stated, is unapologetic; after Clytemnestra begs Agamemnon to spare their daughter, the chorus women tell him, "Be persuaded" (*pithou*, 1209), since it is a good thing to come together in saving a child (1209–1210). After Iphigenia's lyric lament for her doom, beginning with an imaginative narrative of the Judgment of Paris and ending with her own indulgence in Helen-bashing, the chorus women assure her that she ought never to have experienced these misfortunes, and they pity her for it (1336–1337). When Iphigenia has her *volte face* and agrees to die willingly, the women praise her for acting nobly (*gennaiôs*, 1402), but claim that, as far as fate (*to tês tychês*) and the goddess Artemis (*to tês theou*) are concerned, things are sick (*nosei*, 1403). But these minimal expressions of distress at the unfolding drama have no practical effect on events, any more than the average person's sympathy for the tribulations of celebrities has any effect on those celebrities' lives. Iphigenia's displacement in the army camp thereby becomes even more isolating. Even the chorus' song with Iphigenia at the play's end (1475–1531) is not a lament, as much as a hymn to Artemis directed by Iphigenia herself; from the latter's perspective this is appropriate, since Iphigenia names her ritual (voluntary sacrifice and marriage to death, rather than the slaughter of an unwilling victim) as much as she chooses her song. The chorus women thereby remain marginalized, and in the end cannot sing the song they might want, but only what another person tells them to.

What is particularly Euripidean about these varied instances of female solidarity and silence? It is important to understand that choral silence was not the only normative pattern open to the author. If scholars like Cohen and Hunter are right in their assessments of the power of gossip as social control, we would expect that if Euripidean choruses had any element of real life in them, they would break their silences about the domestic situations of Medea and Phaedra. We would expect women to have some obligation to correct each other socially. Instead, gossip doesn't work. As it is, 'good' gossip—the kind that would exercise social control and encourage good behavior—is replaced by 'bad' gossip, such as that in *Andromache* 930–953, which eggs women like Hermione on to violence. When social control does operate, it cannot operate with the chorus, but must be transferred; Phaedra, for instance, transfers this corrective function to inanimate objects like the house itself. Her

fear of gossip becomes internalized and projected onto her physical surroundings, such as the timbers of the house (*Hippolytus* 415ff.).

Female solidarity, meanwhile, seems to trump all other modes of choral reaction (with the chorus of *Iphigenia in Aulis* being the exception which proves the rule). Helen and Iphigenia share captivity with their choruses, but interestingly (as Montiglio has noted), it is not on that basis that an initial appeal for their silence is made.[8] Euripidean women's willingness to keep secrets (or, in *Ion*, reveal secrets) for another woman is itself commendable, but often reaches a point at which dangerous knowledge is shared which precipitates dangerous action. Montiglio expressed it elegantly:

> As all these passages show, playwrights tend to present the relationship between female characters and female choruses as a secret bonding protected by the complicity of silence. Within a society, that of democratic Athens, in which silent seclusion is the condition imposed on women in real life, it is not surprising that women are the experts at conniving silences also on the stage. By representing women who act through secret networks, the tragedians point to the dangers that supposedly lurk behind women's confinement and exclusion from the sphere of public speech. They go, as it were, beyond the silent curtain of the gynaeceum; and beyond that curtain, in the secrecy of the inner quarters, they imagine women exchanging confidences that remain dangerously silent for them.[9]

Female solidarity suggests that in the Euripidean world, women like Medea and Creusa can be expected to react violently to men whose schemes threaten to disrupt or supplant their role in the household. Murder is the option par excellence for women to solve the dilemma; and furthermore, women can find sympathy from other women for such action. A foreigner like Medea with the reputation of a witch can still gain the sympathy of the average housewife. This would have played into real men's fears of what women might be plotting in their own houses; but there is also a subtle admission that it is men who initiate domestic problems. Euripides always fashions his plots with a challenging twist, never failing to suggest that men are culpable at some level for discord within the home, and that women's violence begins with men's deceits.

[8] Montiglio (2000), 253–254.
[9] Montiglio (2000), 256.

The Silence of the Virgins: Hippolytus and Theonoe[10]

In Euripidean drama, it is not only female choruses, but also actors' roles who sometimes agree to keep a secret for someone else. For example, Ion consents tacitly not to tell the approaching Xuthus about his conversation with Creusa regarding her 'friend's' rape by Apollo. However, there are only two Euripidean characters—Theonoe in *Helen*, and Hippolytus—who take an oath to keep silent a secret for another person (someone who has supplicated them), yet know full well that it is against their own interest and at personal cost. Both Hippolytus and Theonoe are virgins, and their motivation for maintaining their silence is piety (*to eusebes*), as opposed to the female solidarity that inspires the female choruses of each play to keep their heroine's secrets. In both plays, the secrets are eventually revealed, and gods come to Hippolytus' and Theonoe's defense. But there the similarities end. While Theonoe is rescued from death, Hippolytus falls victim to Aphrodite's wrath and dies. In the context of each drama, this is not surprising. After all, the plays are quite opposite in tone: *Hippolytus* is a domestic tragedy that ends with two of its main characters dead, but *Helen* is an escape-tragedy with a deliberately happy conclusion for its protagonist. Hippolytus plays a major role in his drama, Theonoe a minor role in hers.

An examination of Hippolytus and Theonoe can illustrate Euripides' dramatic skill at employing a similar plot device (the virgin who keeps a suppliant's secret and thus puts his/her own life at risk) to two radically different ends. It can also demonstrate how Euripides constructs gender even at the level of such a plot device, since he explores the opposite implications for a man and a woman who, of their own choice, dedicate their lives to perpetual chastity. This comparison of Hippolytus and Theonoe in the context of other tragic virgins will also add to the standard interpretation of Hippolytus as the 'abnormal' male virgin, while offering a new reading of Theonoe.

a. *Who's a Virgin?*

In Greek tragedy, a virgin is a person who has never experienced sexual intercourse, which is often euphemized by reference to Aphrodite/

[10] An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "The Silence of the Virgins: comparing Euripides' Hippolytus and Theonoe," *Antichthon: the Journal of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies* 38 (2004): 10–28. Reprinted with permission.

Kypris ("the Cyprian goddess"). This definition of virgin is usually applied to women, typically as a girl's socially normative sexual status before marriage. An unmarried girl in tragedy can also lose her virginity through rape, which is often glossed as a marriage; in *Ion*, Apollo "yoked Creusa by force into marriage" (*Phoibos ezeuxen gamois biai Kreousan, Ion* 10–11), and Creusa herself describes her rapist as "doing a favor to the Cyprian goddess" (*Kypridi charin prassôn, Ion* 896). However, a tragic woman can be married and still be a virgin; Electra's farmer husband says (with the Cyprian goddess as his witness) that he has never bedded with her, so that Electra is still a *parthenos* (Eur. *Electra* 44). There are also two male virgins in extant tragedy: Hippolytus, who chooses a life of virginity, and Menoeceus of *Phoenician Women*, whose virgin state (and thus appropriateness for human sacrifice) derives from his age, which was simply too young for him to be married.[11]

In general, female virgins in tragedy serve one of three unique social roles. Very young girls (and the boy Menoeceus) are chosen as sacrificial victims, e.g., Polyxena in *Hecuba*, Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the Girl often called Macaria from *Children of Heracles*, and the king's daughter in Euripides' lost play *Erechtheus*. Second, slightly older unmarried women become spinsters in dysfunctional families, e.g. Antigone and Electra (and their sisters in the Sophoclean plays). Finally, tragic virgins serve as priestesses (e.g., Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris)* that are often clairvoyant (e.g., Cassandra, the Pythia, and Theonoe). In contrast, male clairvoyants, such as Teiresias or Calchas, are not virgins, and may even have children; for instance, Teiresias in *Phoenician Women* is led on stage by his daughter.

However, the tragic world imposes a limit to how long a person should (ideally) remain a virgin. In her discussion of *Hippolytus*, Zeitlin argued that virginity (male or female) is problematic if perpetual:

> The *parthenos* cannot linger forever in the meadow, content to embody a static symbol of external and private wholeness. Rather, the mythic

[11] When Teiresias reveals that Ares demands a human sacrifice from the race of the Sown Men, he explains that Creon and his sons Menoeceus and Haemon are the last descendants of that race (*Phoenician Women* 940–944). Haemon is betrothed to Antigone, which means he is typologically no longer *êitheos* ("an unmarried youth," 945), whereas the younger, unattached Menoeceus is a equivalent to a 'virgin.' Menoeceus is even described as a *pôlos* ("colt," 947), a word often used in its feminine form to describe young girls. Menoeceus' virginity may be of use to the state (explicitly by its extinction), but nowhere does Menoeceus devote himself to a virgin goddess or claim he wants to remain a virgin forever. Diggle's OCT brackets these lines.

> associations of flower, meadow, and maiden align the human maturation cycle with that of the seasons so that the *parthenos* above all is the one who is poised precisely at the place and moment of passage. The virgin must enter into the temporal flow of life.[12]

Female virgins in tragedy rarely envisage themselves as perpetual virgins by choice. There is no indication that sacrificial maidens would not have married had they lived longer (Iphigenia of the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, of course, had every intention of marrying when lured to Aulis). Spinsters like Antigone and Electra are virgins by misfortune, not choice. In the case of some priestesses, it is not clear whether virginity is by choice or compulsion. Euripides' *Trojan Women* can refer to the virgin Cassandra's "unwed life" (*alektron zoan*) as Apollo's "gift" or *geras* to her (253–254); but Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (1072–1272) represents a much less amicable relationship between the prophecy-spewing virgin and the destructive Loxias.[13] However, the two Euripidean characters under study here—Hippolytus and Theonoe—disassociate themselves from Kypris willingly and desire to remain chaste forever, with disastrous consequences for the male virgin, but few if any consequences for the female virgin.

b. *Hippolytus*

What is odd about Hippolytus' virginity is that it is not a transitional state. Unlike any other man in tragedy, he intends to stay a virgin always. It has often been remarked that Hippolytus' abstention from sex prevents the normative transition into manhood, from ephebe to hoplite.[14] His chastity makes his experience of gender problematic, in as much as young girls are kept chaste before marriage, and "le mariage est à la fille ce que la guerre est au garçon," to quote Vernant, yet

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[12] Zeitlin (1985b), 66.

[13] See C.T. Parker (1983), 79–81 and 90–93, who argued that evidence for perpetual virginity in a real-life Greek priestess is very difficult to find.

[14] Zeitlin (1985b), 56: "This is the moment for the young man to complete the initiatory scenario that would make him pass from the yoking of horses to the yoking of maidens, from the hunting of game to the hunting of a wife." Goldhill (1986), 120–121: "The hunt … should mark a part of Hippolytus' role as male entering a position and status in society. But his desire to remain apart from society in his refusal of sexual relations and continual worship of Artemis through the chase perverts this functioning of the hunt: it marks his desire to remain outside society, on the edge, away from his role in the oikos. Hippolytus' rejection of Aphrodite, then, is not just a desire for chastity or purity, but also a subverting of his passage to manhood." Cf. also Burnett (1986), 177; and Luschnig (1988), 55.

Hippolytus prepares himself for neither.[15] This is further complicated by the description of his virginity, from the very opening moments of the play, as an alliance with a virgin goddess (Artemis) and a revulsion from the goddess of sex (Aphrodite). In the prologue delivered by Aphrodite, we learn that Hippolytus not only refrains from beds (*lektra*) and sexual unions (*gamoi*, 14); he also calls Aphrodite the worst of the gods (13) and spends all his time with Artemis, whom he considers the greatest of the gods (16). When Hippolytus himself enters the stage and stands (presumably) before two cult statues of these very goddesses, he claims he has no interest in a god that is adored at night (106), referring, of course, to Aphrodite and sexual intercourse. But what is the precise nature of Hippolytus' relationship with the virgin goddess Artemis?

Greek myth is filled with tales of relationships (sexual or otherwise) between mortals and gods, and the consequences of these relationships often differ according to gender. For example, a striking feature of the clairvoyant virgin priestess or prophetess is her pseudo-sexual relationship with the god who speaks through her while "possessing" her. As Giulia Sissa has argued, the veracity of the Pythia's pronouncements depended on her having "neither culture nor feelings nor social nor sexual relations of her own" in order for the god's truth to move through her without struggle. Sissa goes so far as to argue that a Pythia, even after possession by the god, could return to a state of virginity after the delivery of her oracle, that she "could at any time recover her virginal closure."[16] In contrast, union with a goddess does not endow a mortal man with second sight; he may earn his eternal youth, but is certainly not restored to virginity.[17] Some men are held captive by goddesses for long periods of time (Odysseus and Calypso), even for an eternity graced by the goddess' visitation afresh each day (Tithonus and Eos, Endymion and Selene). The *Odyssey* represents Odysseus' time in Calypso's bed as a kind of male rape, for Calypso is no longer pleasing to him, but he lies beside her against his will, out of necessity (*Odyssey*

[15] Vernant (1974), 38. Vernant's discussion of how perpetual female virgins show characteristics of the male warrior (e.g., Amazons and Athene are virgin warriors) is interesting with respect to Hippolytus. Hippolytus' virginity reflects on his Amazon mother, yet at the same time prevents him from achieving the mature status of warrior. He is an accomplished hunter, but not a hoplite.

[16] Sissa (1990), 170. Sissa's argument is based on her assertion that the ancients did *not* equate the loss of virginity with the breaking of the hymen.

[17] Cf. the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, in which Anchises is Aphrodite's passionate one-night stand, fulfilling the male fantasy of having the perfect woman show up at one's doorstep and beg him to take her (*h Hym* 5.130–155).

5.153–155). In some myths, the man is the companion of the goddess (Orion and Artemis, Adonis and Aphrodite) or the lover of the goddess (Iasion and Demeter) or even the lover of a god (Hyacinthus and Apollo), but ends up dead. The mortals die through the deity's wrath (Artemis killing Orion), wrath at the deity (Artemis killing Aphrodite's beloved Adonis, Zeus killing Iasion), or a mistake on the deity's part (Artemis killing Orion, Apollo killing Hyacinthus).[18]

The Orion myth (at least, in some traditions preserved by Hellenistic writers) is closest to that of Hippolytus; or rather, Orion is like a Hippolytus without an aversion to sex. According to Euphorion (the grammarian and poet of the 4th century BCE), Orion was hunting (*synkynêgetôn*) with Artemis, but was so aroused by the activity that he attempted to rape her (*biasasthai*, Euphorion 101 Powell = Schol. *Il.* 18.486). Aratus, writing in the 270s BCE, in his *Phaenomena* concurs that Orion had vexed Artemis (644) by laying hands on her robe (*helkêsai peploio*, 638). According to Hyginus, the same story was told by Callimachus and 'others,' that Orion was killed *cum Dianae vim voluerit afferre* ("because he wanted to offer violence to Artemis," Hyginus *De Astronomia* 2.34 = Callim. 570 Pf.). In all these versions, it was in retribution for attempted rape that Artemis sent the scorpion against him, hence Orion's position in the sky next to the constellation Scorpio. Orion's desire is transgressive, yet Artemis' virginity is never tarnished. But according to Istros, Artemis returned Orion's love so much that people almost thought she had married him; this aroused the jealousy of Artemis' brother Apollo, who tricked Artemis into killing Orion by accident.[19]

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[18] ORION: The death of Orion by Artemis' painless arrows is mentioned at *Odyssey* 5.123–124, although in that version Orion is beloved by Eos (5.121); Odysseus sees Orion's ghost in the underworld at *Odyssey* 11.572–575. The story of Artemis killing Orion by accident (Istros) is detailed below. ADONIS: The death of Adonis by Artemis' arrows is alluded to at Eur. *Hipp.* 1416–1422, even though in most legends Adonis is killed by a boar; Apollodorus 3.14.4.1 states that the boar is caused by Artemis to kill him. IASION: Demeter's love for Iasion and his death by Zeus' thunderbolt is recounted at *Odyssey* 5.125–128. HYACINTHUS: Apollo accidentally killed Hyacinthus with a discus; in some versions, the rejected rival god Zephyrus causes the wind to divert the discus towards Hyacinthus' head.

[19] Istrus autem dicit Oriona a Diana esse dilectum et paene factum ut ei nupsisse existimaretur; quod cum Apollo aegre ferret et saepe eam obiurgans nihil egisset, natantis Orionis longe caput solum videri conspicatus, contendit cum Diana eam non posse sagittam mittere ad id quod nigrum in mari videretur. Quae se cum vellet in eo studio maxime artificem dici, sagitta missa, caput Orionis traiecit. [Istrus, moreover, says that Orion was loved by Diana, and that it almost happened that she was thought

Hippolytus, like these stories of Orion, shares with the virgin Artemis a companionship that is uncomfortably ambiguous. His opening speech (*Hippolytus* 73–87), during which he offers Artemis a garland that he plucked himself from her sacred meadow which Aidôs herself tends, is replete with sexual imagery. The meadow is the *locus classicus* of sexual violence, where flower-gathering maidens like Kore and Creusa lose their virginity through rape. The whole passage systematically echoes lyric erotic images of garlands, meadows, river waters, and the act of plucking.[20] In the words of Douglas Cairns, "the lyric associations … suggest the coming of Love to those who had previously been inviolate, and this accordingly creates a discord in relation to Hippolytus' determination to remain chaste."[21] Yet while Cassandra or the Pythia may be physically possessed by Apollo (there are no virgin gods, after all), Artemis ever-virgin never touches Hippolytus, neither in their daily intercourse in the forests, nor at the end of the play when Hippolytus lies dying.[22] Furthermore, Hippolytus' pride in his virginity as communion with Artemis is so abnormal that Theseus refuses to believe it true, scoffing at Hippolytus' claim that he consorts with the gods more than mortal man (948). No one would think Hippolytus was another Orion in causing gossip that Artemis had married him.

But it is not so much Hippolytus' virginity as it is his obsession with piety (predicated on his sexual abstinence) that precipitates his tragic death. Though Hippolytus is horrified to learn of his stepmother Phaedra's incestuous and adulterous desire for him, he has sworn to the

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to have married him; since Apollo was bearing this ill, yet had done nothing (though he abused her often), after he perceived that when Orion was swimming in the distance, only his head was seen, he argued with Diana that she was not able to send an arrow towards that thing which appeared black in the sea. She—since she wished herself to be said to be very skilled in that art—shot an arrow and pierced through Orion's head.] Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2. 34 = Istros 334.64J. For a full account of the variant myths of Orion, see Fontenrose (1981).

[20] Bremer (1975) and Pigeaud (1976).

[21] Cairns (1993), 316.

[22] This lack of contact between gods and mortals is somewhat over-determined in the plot of *Hippolytus*. In the words of Burkert (1979: 112), "One may wonder, on the other hand, about the curiously complicated method Aphrodite uses to take her revenge: she has Phaedra cause Theseus to pronounce a curse, which moves Poseidon to send a bull from the sea, who in turn causes Hippolytus' horses to go wild, which finally kills the hero. If I were Aphrodite, I would not trust this assassination machine to work properly. At any rate, Aphrodite could have driven the horses wild herself.… Thus one begins to wonder what really is Aphrodite's business in the affair. It does not usually take two gods to kill one man; and Hippolytus is more directly the victim of Poseidon."

Nurse, even before he heard what she had to say, to keep it secret (611). As Hippolytus leaves the Nurse, he insists that it is his piety (*to eusebes*, 656) that saves her, and that he will "keep his mouth silent" (*siga d'hexomen stoma*, 660). When Phaedra kills herself and accuses Hippolytus of rape, Theseus curses him; oddly enough, the curse is uttered even before Hippolytus arrives on the scene, so that his doom is sealed before any chance of self-defence. When Hippolytus does arrive and claims his innocence, Theseus mocks his son as being as great a charlatan as the Orphic vegetarians; no man's excessive piety could be genuine (948–970). For Hippolytus, virginity is more than simply physical; it is a state of the soul. He insists that apart from what he has seen in paintings, he has no knowledge of sex, for his soul is that of a virgin (*parthenon psychên echôn*, 1006). Hippolytus has the opportunity to defend himself with the knowledge of Phaedra's lusts, but chooses not to break his oath of silence. Again, it is his concern for his piety to the gods that convinces him not to break his promise; he rationalizes that his father would not believe the truth anyway, and he would be impious for nothing (1060–1063). This fits in with Hippolytus' sanctimonious reputation that works against him.

He also hates women—not an uncommon sentiment in Euripides, but in this play it rounds out the personality of a man who, as Aphrodite complains, will never touch the marriage bed. Despite his special relationship with a goddess, Artemis is not a 'woman' in Hippolytus' sense. That is, the danger of mortal women is in their cost (the money that fathers must spend in providing dowries for daughters, and the wealth husbands must waste on their wives, 625–633); their danger is in their lusts (specifically maids plotting affairs for their mistresses, as Hippolytus assumes the Nurse is doing, 640–652); and most importantly, the danger of women is in their scheming minds—the last of which, at least, will be proven true for the boy by Phaedra's final deception.[23]

Hippolytus' silence costs him his life, and even Artemis cannot save him. She does, however, appear at the end of the play and exonerate him to Theseus' face:

> ὁ δ', ὥσπερ οὖν δίκαιον, οὐκ ἐφέσπετο
> λόγοισιν, οὐδ' αὖ πρὸς σέθεν κακούμενος
> ὅρκων ἀφεῖλε πίστιν, εὐσεβὴς γεγώς.

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[23] For a reading of this passage as it relates to a tragic male desire to curb tragic women's threat to social structures by controlling women's circulation, see Rabinowitz (1993), 156–159, the section "Hippolytos's Diatribe."

ARTEMIS: He, as was right, did not fall in
with her words, nor yet again, though rejected by you,
did he break the bond of his oath, being a pious man.

Hippolytus 1307–1309

Artemis does come to Hippolytus' defense, but too late. Her delayed arrival shows that the most dire implication of Hippolytus' self-styling as male virgin was his isolation. His companionship with the invisible and untouchable Artemis has left him utterly alone. He eschewed normative society by refusing marriage and the connections it makes, and alienated others by giving the impression that his piety was greater than anyone else's, precisely because of his status as the goddess' favourite. But in the end, it offered no security. In Goff's words, "He who had not needed the voice of other people, only that of the goddess Artemis, is reduced to calling on inanimate objects."[24] His pious lifestyle is also unconvincing. Despite taking the oath of secrecy for the suppliant nurse, his moralizing tirade against women allowed Phaedra to fear he would break his oath; and although, as Goff said, he can "appeal directly to his *sôphrosynê*, for which he claims a self-sufficiency beyond the voice of others," Theseus distrusts any man's claim to such self-sufficiency.[25] However *eusebês* Hippolytus may have been in practice, his failure to win credibility is a result of the greater cultural belief in the untrustworthiness (perhaps even the implausibility) of pious male claims to virginity.

c. *Theonoe*

Theonoe in Euripides' *Helen* is also motivated by piety, but her piety—as well as her virginity—is more conventional than Hippolytus'. Even so, Euripides does not allow his audience to reach this conclusion right away. In contrast to Hippolytus, whose peculiar virgin status is problematized as soon as the drama begins (first in the divine prologue and then in the boy's entrance), Theonoe's virginity and its precise nature are drawn out gradually.

The virgin Theonoe is mentioned five times in *Helen* before her actual entrance, and much more attention is given to her prophetic powers than to her virgin status. In the prologue, Helen does identify Theonoe as the *eugenê parthenon* (10) of Proteus, although *parthenos* at

[24] Goff (1990), 12.
[25] Goff (1990), 25.

this point simply means "young girl" or "daughter." Two lines later, Helen describes how this daughter's name was changed from Eido to Theonoe "when she grew to the age ripe for marriage" (*epei d'es hêbên êlthen hôraian gamôn*, 12). Euripides probably mentions this fact to differentiate her from other sacrificial virgins, such as *Children of Heracles's* Macaria, who are barely nubile but do not intend to remain virgins forever. At this point in the drama, however, Helen's narration gives no implication that Theonoe did not actually marry. Instead, Helen informs us that Theonoe is clairvoyant (hence the etymology of her second name), knowing all things present and future, and that she inherited this gift from her maternal grandfather Nereus (13–15).

The second time the audience hears of Theonoe is during Teucer's sudden arrival in Egypt on a mission to consult her, whom he calls prophetic (*thespiôidos*), to learn how to find fair winds to Cyprus. Later, the chorus women persuade Helen to consult Theonoe about Menelaus' whereabouts. Again, Theonoe's knowledge is emphasized (317, 325), and she is referred to once more as a *parthenos* (328). Chorus and Helen exit together, and when Helen returns, she is full of excitement at learning of Menelaus' survival from a woman "who knows all things truthfully" (*hê pant' alêthôs oide*, 530). Finally, after the recognition scene, Helen warns Menelaus that their plans for escape first require the secrecy of Theonoe, a woman who "knows everything" (*pant' oid'*, 822) and who must be persuaded to help them.

Theonoe is a curious character; an audience hears more said about her than they hear her say. She is spoken to off stage (or rather, she is spoken of as having been spoken to) long before (528–534) and long after (1369–1373) she herself speaks on stage. This stage time consists of only two speeches (865–893, 998–1029) in one scene. Euripides may have intended an element of surprise that she appears at all, given that not a few of his plays utilize messengers to narrate off-stage actions or conversations with characters who never actually appear (Creon's daughter in *Medea*, Apollo in *Ion*, Neoptolemus in *Hecuba*, Creon in *Suppliant Women*, Odysseus in *Iphigenia in Aulis*), or who are brought on stage only as corpses (Aegisthus in *Electra*, Neoptolemus in *Andromache*).[26] If we take Theonoe's opening words literally, her entrance is visually stunning, lit with torches and sulphur in the air (865–867). But more importantly, her entrance is narratively stunning, in that she fulfills

[26] For a discussion of the former convention in *Hecuba*, see Coo (2006). For the latter convention, see de Jong (1990).

an audience's expectations of what a clairvoyant might say, yet offers no clues about her ethics. Euripides had little mythology on which to base Theonoe's character, though it is clearly derived from Eidothea, daughter of the clairvoyant Proteus in the *Odyssey*.[27] What Euripides has done for Theonoe is combine virginity and clairvoyance so that she falls neatly into the conventional category of priestess. As she enters the stage, she is preceded by female servants who purify the way for her.

ἡγοῦ σύ μοι φέρουσα λαμπτήρων σέλας
θείου δε σεμνὸν θεσμὸν αἰθέρος μυχούς,
ὡς πνεῦμα καθαρὸν οὐρανοῦ δεξώμεθα·
σὺ δ' αὖ κέλευθον εἴ τις ἔβλαψεν ποδὶ
στείβων ἀνοσίῳ, δὸς καθαρσίῳ φλογί,
κροῦσόν τε πεύκην, ἵνα διεξέλθω, πάρος·
νόμον δὲ τὸν ἐμὸν θεοῖσιν ἀποδοῦσαι πάλιν
ἐφέστιον φλόγ' ἐς δόμους κομίζετε.

THEONOE: You, hold the lamp bright before me and lead on,
and fumigate in holy ritual the recesses of the air,
that I may draw the holy breath of heaven.
And you, if anyone has polluted my path
with unholy step, give it to the purging flame,
wave the torch before me, that I may pass.
When you have paid to the gods my prescribed service,
carry the fire back to the central hearth. *Helen* 865–872

In this single entrance, Theonoe alerts the audience to the fact that she is not merely clairvoyant, but also an Egyptian priestess of sorts who requires the air and her path to be purified. Even though Euripides' contemporary Herodotus reported explicitly that no women held priestly office in Egypt (Herodotus 2.35), Theonoe's rituals probably resonated with general Greek suppositions of Egyptian religious customs. Herodotus describes at length various examples of the purity of Egyptian priests, including foods they were forbidden to touch, the washing of their clothing, the shaving and bathing of their bodies, and circumcision (Herodotus 2.37). Plutarch also, although obviously writing centuries later, described in *Moralia* 383B Egyptian priests burning myrrh and resin to rarefy the air. Theonoe's role as priestess is further made believable by her other role as the virgin sister of a

[27] Dale (1967), xiii, wrote: "[Theonoe] is essentially an invention of Euripides, though re-created from Eidothea, daughter of Proteus the Old Man of the Sea in *Odyssey* 4. Eidothea was an immortal like her father, but now that Proteus has faded from a god to a mortal king (though married to a Nereid) his daughter had to be mortal too, though gifted with divine knowledge inherited from Nereus."

ruler; she thus falls neatly into the greater social category of priestesses (especially Greek ones), who both in Athenian reality and mythically (like the Trojan Cassandra) were often from ruling classes. As priestess, Theonoe can be assumed to be in communion with (if not necessarily in service to) some god; and, in fact, Theonoe herself explains her intimate knowledge of a situation in heaven. In a speech that is terse, to the point, and immediately threatening, she explains that Hera and Aphrodite are vying with each other concerning Menelaus' return with Helen to Greece. Theonoe is also able to explain each goddesses' motives: Hera wants to expose Aphrodite as having deceived Paris, while Aphrodite fears being condemned by mortal men (878–886).

Uncertain which goddess to follow, Theonoe decides that because her brother has ordered her to inform him of Menelaus' appearance, it would be in the interest of her own safety (*hopôs an toumon asphalôs echê*, 893) to expose Menelaus' identity. Yet she has given no indication how she might be persuaded to do otherwise, or what aspect of her ethical character might be manipulated by her interlocutors. Helen and Menelaus must surmise this for themselves, so that in effect they invent Theonoe for the audience by proposing that she ought to be moved by concerns for piety. In the end, Theonoe reveals that these propositions were spot on.

When Theonoe requests that someone summon her brother, Helen immediately adopts the suppliant position. Menelaus earlier hoped that Helen would be able to persuade her based on their common bond as women: "It's your job; woman to woman is a suitable line of approach" (*son ergon, hôs gynaiki prosphoron gynê*, 830). One complication, however, is that Theonoe is a virgin. In other plays in which a heroine enjoins a female chorus to silence (*Medea, Hippolytus, Iphigenia in Tauris*), both the heroine and the chorus are on equal levels of female sexual experience. Medea and Phaedra (both married women) speak to wives of citizens, and Iphigenia is in the company of other virgins.[28] In this case, however, Helen (a married woman with a daughter) is asked

[28] This, at least, is how I make sense of *Iphigenia in Tauris*. At line 1071, Iphigenia begs the Greek captive women of the chorus for silent complicity in the name of the children they left at home; but this line was deleted by Dindorf. The chorus women should be read as virgins, given that they sing of returning to the house where they used to participate in choral dances at marriage feasts (1140–1152), which is a rite only young unmarried girls performed. Lattimore, however, does not find this convincing enough; see his translation (1973), 79, ad 1049.

by Menelaus to relate to an unmarried virgin.[29] Helen is clearly in an anomalous situation. Separated from her husband for years and defiantly chaste against Theoclymenus' advances, Helen has been as physically pure and untouched as Theonoe. Yet Helen recognizes a difference in status between them. Whereas Theonoe is an experienced and revered prophetess, she is inexperienced in love. Even though Menelaus suggests talking woman to woman, Helen rejects such an approach and adopts the suppliant position before Theonoe (which was Helen's plan at 831, and put into action at 894), thus emphasizing their inequality. This is partly based on a power differential (after all, Theonoe is in the position to betray them, and also represents the ruling family in Egypt), but also has a sexual dimension. With her first words, Helen addresses Theonoe as virgin (*parthen'*, 894), then segues into a request bathed in the language of love: namely, to spare the most beloved husband who has come back to her embrace (898–899). She returns to a similar emotional appeal later in her speech when describing her pain as a mother, and how she will at long last see her daughter married, whom no one wants to marry now (933).

In case such an emotional tack doesn't work, Helen appeals to Theonoe's piety, that she not betray it (*tên eusebeian mê prodôis tên sên pote*, 901) by revealing Menelaus' presence. Since the chief manifestation of this piety, according to Helen, should be Theonoe's respect for her father Proteus' even greater piety, Helen barrages her with references to that good and just father (*patri*, 910; *tou patros*, 914; *chrêstôi patri*, 918; *tou patros*, 920; *patros dikaiou*, 941; *patros chrêstou*, 942). Helen's rhetorical skill is excellent, and her crowning argument is expertly framed:

μὴ δῆτα, παρθέν', ἀλλά σ' ἱκετεύω τόδε·
δὸς τὴν χάριν μοι τήνδε καὶ μιμοῦ τρόπους
πατρὸς δικαίου· παισὶ γὰρ κλέος τόδε
κάλλιστον, ὅστις ἐκ πατρὸς χρηστοῦ γεγὼς
ἐς ταὐτὸν ἦλθε τοῖς τεκοῦσι τοὺς τρόπους.

HELEN: No indeed, virgin, but as a suppliant I ask you this:
grant me this favor and imitate the character
of a just father; for this is the finest glory for children:

[29] The Hippocratic medical writers articulate the changes that marriage (i.e., a woman's first penetration during intercourse) and childbirth bring about in the body of the young girl. She is transformed from *parthenos* into *gynê*. The medical writers also describe diseases likely to be suffered by a virgin as she approaches puberty, in the case that she does not marry. See *Generation and Nature of the Child, Diseases of Women* I.1, and *Diseases of Young Girls*.

when the child of a worthy father
reaches the same level as its parents in terms of character.

Helen 939–943

With this closing to her speech, Helen engages with Theonoe's self-identification with her father Proteus' piety (a facet of her character which Theonoe herself will admit later). This powerful appeal is significantly prefaced (939) by addressing Theonoe once again as virgin (*parthen'*) and re-iterating Helen's status as suppliant (*hiketeuô*), an exact re-performance of the speech's opening words (*ô parthen', hiketis*, 894). Helen has come full circle, and entwines the themes of virginity, piety, Theonoe's respect for Proteus, and the two women's unequal status, all in one compact sentence that ends with a resounding alliteration of sigmas, taus, and a theta: ἐς ταὐτὸν ἦλθε τοῖς τεκοῦσι τοὺς τρόπους (943).

Menelaus, however, does not prostrate himself before Theonoe, and in fact protests that he will not address his appeal to her at all. He aims his words at the mute tomb of Proteus, all the while expertly commenting on the virgin he does not look at. Like Helen, Menelaus keeps returning to the leitmotif of Theonoe's father (*sou patros*, 961; *sôi patri*, 987), even when he is not actually addressing Theonoe (*patera*, 966; *patros eusebous*, 973). But his speech has a very different feel from Helen's. Dale described it thus: "Eur[ipides] has made Helen's [argument] an appeal, Menelaus' a demand, for justice."[30] If so, Menelaus' demand takes the form of insinuations and posturing designed to give Theonoe a guilt trip. While addressing Proteus' spirit, Menelaus remarks that surely Theonoe will not let her father be badly spoken of (966–968); and while apostrophizing Hades, he asks the god to compel Theonoe to surpass her pious father (*patros eusebous*, 973) by restoring his (Menelaus') marriage. He also bullies Theonoe directly. He states explicitly that unless she helps them escape, "you will be seen to be an evil woman" (*su de gynê kakê phanêi*, 958); and that though she may kill him if she wishes, "you will not kill your ill-fame" (*dyskleas gar ou kteneis*, 993). He draws a hyper-dramatic scenario of his and Helen's joint suicide if Theonoe betrays them, then crowns it with the threat that after their blood gushes down Proteus' monument (984–985), their corpses will be an undying source of pain (*athanaton algos*) for Theonoe, and a source of censure for her father (*psogos de sôi patri*, 987).

[30] Dale (1967), 131 ad 993.

As we expect from Euripides, these persuasive *rheseis* are as much windows into the character of the speakers as they are to the character of Theonoe. Menelaus in particular reveals many of his gender obsessions. It was he who suggested that Helen could relate to Theonoe as woman to woman (830); but when Helen fails to do this, Menelaus refuses to follow Helen's example. He frames his speech, beginning and end, with an insistence upon manliness:

> ἐγὼ σὸν οὔτ' ἂν προσπεσεῖν τλαίην γόνυ
> οὔτ' ἂν δακρῦσαι βλέφαρα· τὴν Τροίαν γὰρ ἂν
> δειλοὶ γενόμενοι πλεῖστον αἰσχύνοιμεν ἄν.
> καίτοι λέγουσιν ὡς πρὸς ἀνδρὸς εὐγενοῦς
> ἐν ξυμφοραῖσι δάκρυ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν βαλεῖν.
> ἀλλ' οὐχὶ τοῦτο τὸ καλόν, εἰ καλὸν τόδε,
> αἱρήσομαι 'γὼ πρόσθε τῆς εὐψυχίας.
>
> MENELAUS: I could not bring myself to fall down at your knees,
> or wet my eyes with tears; for if
> I were cowardly, I would disgrace Troy greatly.
> And yet they say it is befits a noble man
> in misfortune to shed tears from his eyes.
> But this honorable thing, if it is honorable,
> I will not choose in preference to courage. *Helen* 947–953
>
> τί ταῦτα; δακρύοις εἰς τὸ θῆλυ τρεπόμενος
> ἐλεινὸς ἦν ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ δραστήριος.
>
> What talk is this? Had I turned to tears like a woman,
> rather than being forceful, I would be pitied more. *Helen* 991–992[31]

Menelaus has spent most of his stage time being humiliated. He has found himself shipwrecked (386–434), verbally abused by an old woman doorkeeper (435–482), and in an embarrassing reunion with his wife in which, first, he did not recognize her (567–593), then required her to persuade him of her chastity (660–697), and finally discovered his life was in danger (777–805). It was only at this point, when Helen suggested he escape Egypt without her, that Menelaus began to posture himself in the role of masculine hero with the utterance, "Oh! You have spoken cowardly (*anandra*, literally "unmanly") words, unworthy of ⟨the conqueror of⟩ Troy" (808). His speech to Theonoe is a continuation of his new posturing; playing the woman now would shame him. This is visually ironic, given that Menelaus is still dressed in rags so horrible that earlier he was ashamed to ask for directions while dressed in

[31] Diggle in his OCT brackets these lines, following Schenkl and Hartung.

them (415–417), and Helen found them ugly enough to belong to a bandit (553–554). Of all three actors in this scene, Menelaus is the most suitably dressed for grovelling, yet refuses to act that part.

When Helen and Menelaus' supplications are over, Theonoe finally reveals her true self. She is not persuaded by female solidarity, i.e., what she might have in common with Helen. She is moved instead by appeals to other things. Her first words rehearse all of her own and her interlocutors' *topoi*: first, their appeal to piety (and her desire to achieve it); then, their respect for the good name of her father; then, their argument about potential shame or ill-fame (*dyskleia*):

> ἐγὼ πέφυκά τ' εὐσεβεῖν καὶ βούλομαι
> φιλῶ τ' ἐμαυτήν, καὶ κλέος τοὐμοῦ πατρὸς
> οὐκ ἂν μιάναιμ', οὐδὲ συγγόνῳ χάριν
> δοίην ἂν ἐξ ἧς δυσκλεὴς φανήσομαι.

> THEONOE: I am by nature—and I want to be—pious,
> and I love myself, and the good name of my father
> I would not want to taint, nor would I want to do for my brother
> a favor, as a result of which I would be revealed as ill-famed.
>
> *Helen* 998–1001

Theonoe's statement that she loves herself (999) sounds odd to modern ears, but Cairns cleverly explains this self-love or *philautia* as referring "either to the self-respect which renders one true to one's own principles or to the impulse towards self-protection against the criticism of others," and thereby a part of "the dispositional background from which her *aidôs* at ignoring the arguments of the suppliants brings."[32] Finally, she explains her duty to turn her brother Theoclymenus away from his "impiety" (*dyssebeias*, 1021) and change him into a "righteous" (*hosios*) man. Theonoe agrees to keep silent (*sigêsomai*, 1017, and again in 1023). It is not actually in her interest at all to keep silent, but is presented as a selfless act.

More notably, it is on the basis of her virginity that Theonoe is able to ally herself with Hera against Aphrodite and keep Menelaus' arrival secret. In a vein similar to Hippolytus, she states:

> Ἥρᾳ δ', ἐπείπερ βούλεταί σ' εὐεργετεῖν,
> ἐς ταὐτὸν οἴσω ψῆφον· ἡ Κύπρις δέ μοι
> ἵλεως μὲν εἴη, συμβέβηκε δ' οὐδαμοῦ·
> πειράσομαι δὲ παρθένος μένειν ἀεί.

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[32] Cairns (1993), 282. Cairns also glosses φιλῶ τ' ἐμαυτήν as "I treat myself as a *philê*" (1993: 280, n. 55).

THEONOE: But with Hera—since she wishes to help you—
I will cast my vote the same. And may the Cyprian goddess
be kindly to me, but she has never had anything to do with me.
I will try to remain a virgin forever. *Helen* 1005–1008[33]

Montiglio compared Theonoe's silence to the reluctance to speak shown by other prophets in tragedy (Teiresias in Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, Cassandra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon)*, and argued for a substantial connection between divine plan and prophetic silence. In her words,

> From the prophet's silence there breaks out a divine, inescapable word. Only if the content of this divine word is in turn silence do prophets keep their own silence. When Theonoe resolves to protect Helen and Menelaus by her silence, she does so in order to abide by divine justice. [...] But Theonoe makes her choice while being fully conscious of the will of the gods (1002–1003). At the same moment when she stresses that all depends on her choice, she also alludes to the strife opposing Hera and Aphrodite. Thus, her uncertainty between speech and silence dramatizes a divine conflict, and the victory of silence, as Theonoe herself acknowledges, marks Hera's victory over Aphrodite.[34]

What is worth stressing, however, is that Theonoe's knowledge of the divine argument between Hera and Aphrodite precedes the persuasive speeches of Helen and Menelaus. In fact, Theonoe initially decides to inform on Menelaus (and thus chooses Aphrodite's side over Hera's) to protect her own safety (893, above). While Theonoe is persuaded by a variety of appeals (to piety, to the memory of her father, to her duty towards her brother), it is significant that she positions herself with the divine conflict not in these terms, but in terms of her virginity. As a priestess, Theonoe's alliance with one goddess over another is more acceptable and conventional—not to mention less vehement—than Hippolytus', for Theonoe is never rude to Aphrodite.

Theonoe does more than simply keep silent; she lies. Helen informs the chorus:

ἡ γὰρ συνεκκλέπτουσα Πρωτέως κόρη
πόσιν παρόντα τὸν ἐμὸν ἱστορουμένη
οὐκ εἶπ' ἀδελφῷ· κατθανόντα δ' ἐν χθονὶ
οὔ φησιν αὐγὰς εἰσορᾶν ἐμὴν χάριν.

[33] Diggle in his OCT brackets 1008, following Badham.
[34] Montiglio (2000), 198–199.

HELEN: The daughter of Proteus, helping to conceal it,
when asked, did not tell her brother that my husband is present;
rather, she says that he, dead inside the earth,
does not see the sunlight—(she says this) for my sake. *Helen* 1370–1373[35]

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the dividing line between keeping a secret by saying nothing, and outright lying, is a fine one indeed in Euripides, and is dramatized most overtly in the female choruses of *Hippolytus* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*, whose agreement to 'keep silent' in fact means they deliberately feign ignorance and hand out misleading information.[36] Theonoe follows this pattern, though in her case her complicity in a plot against her brother clearly endangers her own life. Interestingly, Theonoe never considers persuasion of her brother a possibility for the release of Helen. As a woman, Theonoe has no political authority and must rely on deception to wheedle Theoclymenus into doing the right thing. There is no suggestion that she could use force, such as an army or a political coup, to topple Theoclymenus, which would not have involved Helen at all. In fact, it is the deliberate absence of such a war against Theoclymenus (like the Trojan war fought over a phantom Helen) that gives the escape plot its excitement.[37]

The character of Theoclymenus is developed very thinly in the second half of the drama; he does not at first seem terribly tyrannical, and the ease with which he is duped by Helen (including her promises to marry him) does little to raise an audience's estimation of him. Yet at line 1624, his sudden desire to murder his sister proves that Theonoe's earlier concern for her safety (893) was more than justified:

νῦν δὲ τὴν προδοῦσαν ἡμᾶς τεισόμεσθα σύγγονον,
ἥτις ἐν δόμοις ὁρῶσα Μενέλεων οὐκ εἶπέ μοι.
τοιγὰρ οὔποτ' ἄλλον ἄνδρα ψεύσεται μαντεύμασιν.

THEOCLYMENUS: But now I will avenge myself on my traitorous sister,
who, though she saw Menelaus in my house, did not tell me.
Therefore she will never again deceive another man by her prophesies.
Helen 1624–1626

Theoclymenus' loss of trust in Theonoe is predicated specifically on the collapse of the authority of her prophetic powers once she manipulates them for her own purpose (1626). He realises that the virgin who

[35] Diggle in his OCT brackets 1372, following Prinz.
[36] *Hippolytus* 804–805, and 816; *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1293–1310.
[37] Granted, Egyptian sailors do die as a result of Helen's escape (1604ff.), but this carnage does not extend to Helen's captor.

knows everything and has panoptic vision even of events transpiring in heaven, also has a mind of her own. His anger at her disloyalty in not directing that mind to his interests is reflected in the repetition of words for betrayal (*prodousan*, 1624; *proudôken*, 1633; *prodosian*, 1634). His solution is murder. Euripides' decision to have someone (either a previously unknown servant, or the chorus) attempt to intervene, instead of segueing immediately from 1626 into the appearance of the *dei ex machina*, is highly significant. It demonstrates that someone in the mortal world of Egypt on the lowest social rung (i.e., of slave status) is conscious of Theonoe's piety (*eusebestatên*, 1632) and is willing to die on her behalf at the hands of the highest social rung (i.e., a tyrannical king): "For noble slaves, it is a most glorious thing to die for their masters" (*pro despotôn toisi gennaioisi doulois eukleestaton thanein*, 1640–1641). There is also a rapid play on who has the greater justice, Theoclymenus claiming it for himself at 1628, "[I go] where justice commands me" (*hoiper hê dikê keleuei m'*), and the Servant/Chorus assigning it to Theonoe, whose deception was "a just thing to do" (*dikaia dran*, 1633), and denying it to Theoclymenus, "'[Yours is the power when you] do righteous things, not unjust things" (*hosia dran, ta d'ekdik' ou*, 1638). The short scene, composed mainly in *antilabe* and lasting only fifteen lines, reminds an audience that the risk to Theonoe that was invested in her silence has not been resolved, and raises the expectation that Theonoe will either suffer the fate of most other self-sacrificing virgins in tragedy and die off-stage (since the Servant/Chorus can fight Theoclymenus with words only), or that a *deus* will miraculously arrive to save her.

This latter option is precisely what happens. The Discouri arrive and warn the Egyptian king:

οὐδ' ἡ θεᾶς Νηρῇδος ἔκγονος κόρη
ἀδικεῖ σ' ἀδελφὴ Θεονόη, τὰ τῶν θεῶν
τιμῶσα πατρός τ' ἐνδίκους ἐπιστολάς.

ἀλλ' ἴσχε μὲν σῆς συγγόνου μέλαν ξίφος,
νόμιζε δ' αὐτὴν σωφρόνως πράσσειν τάδε.

CASTOR: And the girl sprung from a Nereid goddess,
your sister Theonoe does not wrong you when she honors
the gods' matters and the just commands of her father.

But hold back the black sword from your sister,
and believe that she is doing these things with *sôphrosynê*.

Helen 1646–1648, 1656–1657

That the Dioscuri draw attention to Theonoe's descent from a Nereid is striking, since she and her brother obviously have the same ancestors; the point of the remark is an allusion to her prophetic powers, which (as Helen related in the prologue) Theonoe inherited in the maternal line, from her mother's father Nereus (15). The Dioscuri also confirm what the Servant/Chorus already knew, and which Theonoe herself had maintained: that justice was on her side, in that her father's orders (i.e., to keep Helen safe for her true husband Menelaus) were just. The *dei* also commend her for handling matters *sôphronôs*—a singularly appropriate word for a self-sacrificing virgin, playing on the multiple shades of meaning of *sôphrosynê*, which range from mental discretion to self-control to sexual chastity. Theoclymenus' reaction, as regards Theonoe, is brief and predictable: "No longer do I wish to kill my sister" (*egô d'adelphên ouket' an ktanoim' emên*, 1682). Things could have worked out differently, and Theonoe could have gone the path of other tragic virgins. But *Helen* is not, in general, a tear-jerkingly sad play; the sparing of her life is a fitting final cadence to such an escape drama.

One can compare the acts of selflessness exhibited by Hippolytus and Theonoe—the keeping of an oath and the protecting of a suppliant at risk to oneself—to the willingness of other Euripidean virgins to be sacrificed (e.g., Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, Macaria, and the male Menoeceus from *Phoenician Women*). As Foley has argued, it is a tragic premise that virgins are the perfect models for selfless ethical behavior. Without complicated commitments to spouses or children, virgins have the least to lose when pursuing ethical action that could cost them their life. Instead, they are motivated by concern for male members of their natal family (fathers and brothers), and by extension, the larger community of which these family members are a part; they exhibit "patriotism or Panhellenism."[38] For instance, Macaria in *Children of Heracles* envisions herself as dying for her brothers, and Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis* says she will die on behalf of all Greece.

The premise that virgins are models of selflessness motivated by love of family is not unique to Euripides; Sophocles' Antigone and Electra are also motivated by their love for deceased brothers and fathers. Sophocles presents pairs of unmarried sisters (Antigone and Ismene, Electra and Chrysothemis), one of whom is eager to take an ethical

[38] Foley (2001), 123–125.

stance and the other reluctant; thus there is built in to Sophocles' plays a mechanism for debate over the efficacy of selflessness. This is further complicated with marital and erotic possibilities; e.g., Electra claims that if she and her sister take action and kill Aegisthus themselves, men will want to marry them (Soph. *Electra* 970–985). Euripidean virgins, however, act alone, and allow no opportunity for counter-persuasion. It is in this paradigm that Theonoe should be placed. Her selflessness is motivated not only by her piety, but also her loyalty to her *male* relations. Even though Theonoe's mother Psamathe is alluded to by Helen (8) and the Dioscuri (1646) at opposite ends of the play, Theonoe herself never refers to her or any female relatives, even though she would have plenty of immortal aunts, since Nereus is her maternal grandfather. Instead, she situates herself in the masculine continuum of grandfather, father, and brother. Not only does she inherit "a great shrine of justice" (*hieron tês dikês mega*, 1002) from Nereus; her choice of action is informed by concern for her brother Theoclymenus' ethical future (1019–1021), and her oft-repeated respect for her father Proteus' good name (999–1000, 1009–1010). In fact, her parting words from the stage re-emphasize her devotion to her father:

σὺ δ', ὦ θανών μοι πάτερ, ὅσον γ' ἐγὼ σθένω,
οὔποτε κεκλήσῃ δυσσεβὴς ἀντ' εὐσεβοῦς.

And you, oh my dead father, while I have the strength
you shall never be named impious instead of pious. *Helen* 1028–1029

Hippolytus' selflessness, in contrast, is not as analogous to that of other Euripidean virgins. His silence is not motivated by the interests of his family; he certainly does not keep Phaedra's lust a secret for Phaedra's benefit, but solely because of the binding power of his oath. In fact, Hippolytus rationalizes this act of selflessness as a kind of self-interest. Convinced that Theseus would not believe the truth about Phaedra even if he heard it, Hippolytus decides it would not be worth breaking the oath and being impious.

ΙΠ. ὦ θεοί, τί δῆτα τοὐμὸν οὐ λύω στόμα,
ὅστις γ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν, οὓς σέβω, διόλλυμαι;
οὐ δῆτα· πάντως οὐ πίθοιμ' ἂν οὓς με δεῖ,
μάτην δ' ἂν ὅρκους συγχέαιμ' οὓς ὤμοσα.
ΘΗ. οἴμοι, τὸ σεμνὸν ὥς μ' ἀποκτενεῖ τὸ σόν.

HIPPOLYTUS: Gods, why don't I open my mouth,
I who am destroyed by you to whom I show piety?
But no, I wouldn't convince those whom I must,
and in vain I would break the oaths that I swore.

THESEUS: Oh! Your holiness will be the death of me! *Hippolytus* 1060–1064

By keeping silent, Hippolytus protects *himself*, not his loved ones, from impiety. With this self-serving holy attitude, Hippolytus pales in comparison to other pious virgins. The only other self-sacrificing male virgin in Euripides is *Phoenician Women's* Menoeceus, whose self-sacrifice benefits his city. As for Hippolytus—even though Artemis praises the piety of her favorite in the end and establishes a cult for him—the young man's piety and silence benefit no one, least of all himself.

In summary, Hippolytus' virginity is problematic because he is a Greek man (in particular, a king's illegitimate son), while Theonoe's virginity has no dire consequences because she is a foreign priestess (as well as a daughter and sister of kings). Neither of these virgins has any explicit sexual union with the divine, although Hippolytus' comradeship with Artemis is described in tantalizing sexual vocabulary, perhaps precisely because of Artemis' own perpetual virginity and the ambiguity of the mythology associated with it. Theonoe, however, is never associated with any male god as the source of her prophecy. Furthermore, her aversion to sex is invoked as the background to an ethical decision she makes regarding her family's honor. Hippolytus' isolationist virginity, in contrast, cannot serve any such beneficial social purpose. In the end, as is often the case in Euripides, gender makes a difference.

CHAPTER SIX

WOMEN OUT OF PLACE

As stated in the previous chapters, the idealized silence of women was central to Athenian social ideology. Respectable Athenian women (ideally) stayed at home and did not go out, except for acceptable purposes, such as visiting neighbors or gathering water at springs. Women had to rely on men to represent them in public, though (ideally) they were not talked about at male gatherings (Pericles emphasizes widows at Thucydides 2.45.2). Even in the courts, the orators did not mention respectable women by name, but resorted to elaborate periphrases when speaking of them (Schaps 1977). Similarly in the Hippocratic corpus, women are not named, but are referred to by their relationships to men. In the words of Simon Goldhill, in classical Athens "there is no public position from which a woman can speak and not be out of place."[1]

This being so, how do Euripidean women negotiate their presence in male public spaces? Granted, Greek tragedy is fiction, and tragic women are fictional representations of women from a mythical past, so one should not necessarily expect them to behave as 'real' Athenian women did. Nevertheless, Euripides repeatedly endows his female characters with an innate concern for and awareness of Athenian social conventions, and when they find themselves in public spaces where they must interact with men (e.g., in the army camp of *Iphigenia in Aulis* or the sacred precinct of *Children of Heracles*), they present themselves in particular ways—the apology, for one—to which men would never need to resort.

The previous chapters have focused largely on domestic plays (such as *Medea, Hippolytus, Andromache)* or exile plays (*Helen, Iphigenia in Tauris*). In the domestic plays, women are where they should be—in the

[1] Goldhill (1992), 41. Presumably what Goldhill meant by 'public' is 'officially civic.' Athenian women did play an important role in 'public' festivals that were female-exclusive. For example, at the Thesmophoria, women would occupy the Pnyx; although normally a male space, the Pnyx assumed a temporary designation as a female space, but this was possible only by the absence of men from the festival.

home—in the company of female neighbors with whom they share intimate conversations. In these conversations, there is no indication that women's speech is out of turn as it would be in the company of men. Although Phaedra in *Hippolytus* is reluctant at first to reveal her secret desires to her neighbors, she does not need to apologize for speaking to them at all; indeed, she defends herself for her previous silence. Medea also begs the Corinthian women to forgive her for having lived quietly, thus acknowledging that she has not been an attentive neighbor. In the exile plays, captive women (Helen, Iphigenia) are waiting to be rescued from a foreign land by a close male relative. Because they are in exile, they have no interaction with Greek men (except, of course, their rescuers and, we presume, their captors), and no expectations for proper behavior operate.[2] As it is, their only companions are other captive Greek women, again affording Euripides the opportunity to display female intimate conversations. In this chapter, I will discuss women 'out of place,' that is, in a male space where they would ideally be silent but speak nonetheless. First I will look at the apologies that tragic women make when speaking in male space. Second, I will examine two examples of Euripidean women deliberately out of place: Evadne in *Suppliant Women*, and Clytemnestra and Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. The choruses of both plays are female, but the choruses do not interact with their heroines, with the result that female solidarity is less of an issue than the heroine's own construct of female propriety. This propriety is markedly skewed in these two plays because Evadne and Iphigenia not only speak in a male space, but also exercise authority by naming the ritual they undertake in that space, which in both cases is a marriage to death.

Women's Apologies

> τελευτῶσα δὲ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῶν ἠντεβόλει με καὶ ἱκέτευε συναγαγεῖν αὐτῆς τὸν πατέρα καὶ τοὺς φίλους, εἰποῦσα ὅτι, εἰ καὶ μὴ πρότερον εἴθισται λέγειν ἐν ἀνδράσι, τὸ μέγεθος αὐτὴν ἀναγκάσει τῶν συμφορῶν περὶ τῶν σφετέρων κακῶν δηλῶσαι πάντα πρὸς ἡμᾶς.
>
> And in the end, their mother implored and entreated me to assemble together her father and family, saying that, even though she had not

[2] Moreover, Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris* is a priestess (as is Theonoe in *Helen*). In tragedy, as in real Athenian life, different rules of behavior operated for priestesses; e.g., they were never expected to apologize.

> before been accustomed to speak in the presence of men, the severity of their misfortunes would force her to reveal to us everything regarding their hardships. Lysias 32.11 (*Against Diogeiton*)

When the orator Lysias at the end of the fifth century wrote a prosecution speech for his client in a court case against Diogeiton concerning the embezzlement of household funds, he related a narrative about Diogeiton's daughter—herself a mother—and her determination to berate her father in front of an assembly of male family members. Her first appearance in the story is accompanied by an apology—a claim that she was unaccustomed to "speaking among men" (*legein en andrasi*), and the only reason she would permit herself to do so was the gravity of the circumstances. At the meeting itself, the woman has specific knowledge to share and is adept with facts and figures. She addresses her own father Diogeiton (who is also her former brother-in-law, given that she married her uncle) and accuses him of mishandling the money left to her and her children in her late husband's will, and of lying about how much money he really possessed. She produces records that he recovered seven talents and four thousand drachmae of bottomry loans, as well as money from interest on land mortgages, and that he had some furniture of great value (Lysias 32.14–15). This particular knowledge of household accounts warrants her intervention in her father's matters. She also has interests as a mother, for she describes her own children as dressed in rags and having no shoes or cloaks, while her father's children by her step-mother live a life of affluence (Lysias 32.16). She realizes she must share her knowledge with the male members of the family, but she must share it in a delivery that is considered legitimate; as a woman, she must not seem too pushy in organizing the meeting. She therefore privately persuades a man, namely her son-in-law (Lysias' client), to assemble the other men, and she forthrightly apologizes for the necessity of her unusual involvement. At one level, the apology is *pro forma*; the men would not have listened to her, or might have been skeptical of her, had she not acknowledged her intrusion. But simultaneously the apology might genuinely be felt by the men; in order to be effective, the convention of the apology must be rooted in some real expectation that women do *not* have experience of *legein en andrasi*.

The court speeches of Lysias have much in common with tragedy. Both are Athenian performance-based literature from roughly the same historical period, both are aimed at a male audience, and both describe

women who—regardless of their historicity—play a considerable role in the development of a plot. Both the mythical woman of tragedy and the unnamed woman of the prosecution speech narrative have a greater understanding of a crisis, and they must gain control of language—become the authority figure in the conversation—in order to share their view. The act of apologizing for their involvement in men's matters makes them the focus of attention while deflecting objections that their words are out of place. In Lysias' case against Diogeiton, the woman has superior knowledge of the facts and a peculiar insight into the problem; similarly, the Euripidean woman often knows the better course of actions.

Consider the Girl (often called Macaria) in *Children of Heracles*. In this play, the young children of the deceased Heracles, along with their guardian Iolaus and grandmother Alcmene, are pursued by king Eurystheus of Argos (the same man for whom Heracles had performed his famous labors) and have taken refuge at the temple of Zeus Agoraios in Marathon. When the drama begins, Iolaus occupies the stage with various young sons of Heracles (who are mute) while Alcmene guards Heracles' daughters inside the temple since "we are ashamed to put young virgins on display to the crowd" (*neas gar parthenous aidoumetha ochlôi pelazein*, 43–44). After the Athenian kings Demophon and Acamas (sons of Theseus) agree to give sanctuary to these suppliants, war breaks out between the Argives and the Athenians. Demophon receives dreadful predictions from his seers that he must sacrifice a virgin daughter of a noble father (*sphaxai parthenon hêtis esti patros eugenous*, 401–402) to the goddess Kore in order to rout the enemy. Iolaus and Demophon debate the issue, with Iolaus even offering to hand himself over to the Argive camp as a captive; when their debate reaches an impasse (since Demophon is certain that Eurystheus has no use for Iolaus and only wants to kill Heracles' children), Macaria exits the temple. The first words from her mouth express her apologies:

ξένοι, θράσος μοι μηδὲν ἐξόδοις ἐμαῖς
προσθῆτε· πρῶτον γὰρ τόδ' ἐξαιτήσομαι·
γυναικὶ γὰρ σιγή τε καὶ τὸ σωφρονεῖν
κάλλιστον εἴσω θ' ἥσυχον μένειν δόμων.
τῶν σῶν δ' ἀκούσας, Ἰόλεως, στεναγμάτων
ἐξῆλθον, οὐ ταχθεῖσα πρεσβεύειν γένους,
ἀλλ', εἰμὶ γάρ πως πρόσφορος, μέλει δέ μοι
μάλιστ' ἀδελφῶν τῶνδε κἀμαυτῆς πέρι,
θέλω πυθέσθαι μὴ 'πὶ τοῖς πάλαι κακοῖς
προσκείμενόν τι πῆμα σὴν δάκνει φρένα.

MACARIA: Strangers, please don't think my coming out is brashness.
This is the first thing I will ask,
Since, for a woman, silence and *sôphronein*
Are the best thing, as well as staying quietly within the home.
But when I heard your groans, Iolaus,
I came out—not designated to be the head of the family,
But, since I am in some way fit to hear this, and since I care
Greatly about my brothers and myself,
I wish to learn if on top of our old troubles
Some additional pain is gnawing at your mind.

Children of Heracles 474–483

As she leaves the protection of the temple of Zeus, Macaria's apology sums up all that is considered appropriate and virtuous behavior in a young woman in Greek tragedy. She recognizes her social role: as an unmarried woman, she is expected to remain indoors and stay silent. She also mentions *sôphronein* (i.e., to "have *sôphrosynê*"), a term which can carry a host of meanings, including female chastity (appropriate for a young girl) and 'knowing one's place,' both physically and verbally.[3] And yet, having heard her guardian groaning, she knows there is a crisis. She may not be the head of the family, but she has an interest in learning what has happened. She knows that she is out of place when she speaks, but also knows how to make herself heard. Her apology is genuine as much as it seems *pro forma*; as a young girl in exile, dependent upon her male guardian to supplicate on her and her siblings' behalf, Macaria knows her place: inside and silent.[4] But circumstances demand that she interfere by offering herself up as the sacrifice needed for victory in the ensuing battle. The apology becomes the female equivalent of the 'partial muteness of men' that was detailed in Chapter 4. In the same way that some Euripidean men wait until a proper moment to speak and persuade their audience, Euripidean

[3] This theme of knowing one's verbal place is encountered again later in the play in Alcmene's first entrance. When one of Hyllus' servants tells her that the army is being assembled on the field, she asserts that such news is no concern of hers (*Children of Heracles* 665). Iolaus assures her it does concern her, but agrees that it is *his* place to ask the questions (666), which he does.

[4] This is especially true since Macaria is a *parthenos*. In tragedy, the ideally virtuous young girl is silent and unseen. The speaker of a fragment of Sophocles' *Acrisius* acknowledges:

ῥῆσις βραχεῖα τοῖς φρονοῦσι σώφρονα
πρὸς τοὺς τεκόντας καὶ φυτεύσαντας πρέπει,
ἄλλως τε καὶ κόρῃ τε κἀργείᾳ γένος,
αἷς κόσμος ἡ σιγή τε καὶ τὰ παῦρ᾽ ἔπη

women also wait; but since there is never a time when men will turn to women and ask them to speak, they must boldly interject themselves into men's conversation. This can only be effective if they first defend this interference by appealing to the severity of the situation and the importance of their point of view. In the case of Macaria, she demonstrates the superiority of her point of view through her explanation of the alternative—shame for the whole family. Like so many other tragic women, this young girl is able to debate in front of men; but the fact that she apologizes for her involvement excuses her from any ill-repute, so that as the exchange progresses, Iolaus exclaims that her words continue to outdo themselves: "This word of yours is again more noble (*eugenesteros*) than the one before, and that one was splendid (*aristos*) too!" (553–554).

The Euripidean woman's admission that she is afraid to speak seems to operate on two levels simultaneously: it is both a true confession and a rhetorical ploy. That is, on the one hand, her apology is meant to be taken seriously, and her stage audience is obligated to believe her profession of reluctance. But on the other hand, the apology sounds *pro forma*. The tragic woman's apology is reminiscent of the Athenian court where it was a rhetorical trope for men to claim they were unaccustomed to public speaking; it happened so often that a court audience (and a reader of the orations that survive) could afford to be suspicious of the truth of the disclaimer.[5] In tragedy, the semantics of the apology encompass both sincerity and rhetorical calculation. For example, in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, when Aethra persuades her son

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> For those who think sensible things, brief speech
> to parents and begetters is appropriate,
> especially for a maiden and an Argive by birth,
> for whom silence and few words are an ornament.
>
> Sophocles fr. 64 Lloyd-Jones

Of course, it is the nature of tragedy that these ideal expectations are never met. Macaria must come out and speak, though the apology mitigates any criticism of her. Contrast the vehemence with which Creon criticizes Antigone's unapologetic behavior at Sophocles' *Antigone* 480 ff.

[5] Admittedly, this is difficult to gauge. One thing is certain: speakers in the surviving court cases do *not* invoke their lack of experience in addressing the public when such a disclaimer would clearly be a lie; e.g., Lysias 12 (which Lysias wrote for himself) contains no such apology. One may infer that some speakers (especially those for whom the orators had to compose such speeches) did, in fact, honestly lack experience. Such a disclaimer became a cliché; but clichés are operative only when they are sometimes true.

Theseus to change his mind about Adrastus' appeal for military aid, it has appeared to some that Aethra is genuinely unwilling to speak her mind in front of her son. Helene Foley writes of Aethra, "As a woman who has learned her proper place in Attic society, she has to be encouraged by her son to suggest what she feels sure is good policy."[6] This would be consistent with Aethra's earlier statement in the prologue that it is proper for women always to do things through men (40–41). However, this exchange can be read not as indicative of Aethra's timidity, but as a calculated performance on her part. Knowing that communication between men has failed, and knowing that (although she is a woman) she has an opinion which is for the good of the city, she must express it in a way that does not appear unsolicited. Therefore she prepares herself to speak in the following way: she sobs and hides her face with her veil (286–287) and cries *aiai!* (291). By berating his mother for groaning on the suppliant women's behalf (291), Theseus demonstrates that Aethra has his full attention. After an *ô tlêmones gynaikes* (292) in pity for the mothers, Aethra begins the following exchange with her son:

ΑΙ. εἴπω τι, τέκνον, σοί τε καὶ πόλει καλόν;
ΘΗ. ὡς πολλά γ' ἐστὶ κἀπὸ θηλειῶν σοφά.
ΑΙ. ἀλλ' εἰς ὄκνον μοι μῦθος ὃν κεύθω φέρει.
ΘΗ. αἰσχρόν γ' ἔλεξας, χρήστ' ἔπη κρύπτειν φίλους.
ΑΙ. οὔτοι σιωπῶσ' εἶτα μέμψομαί ποτε
τὴν νῦν σιωπὴν ὡς ἐσιγήθη κακῶς,
οὐδ' ὡς ἀχρεῖον τὰς γυναῖκας εὖ λέγειν
δείσασ' ἀφήσω τῷ φόβῳ τοὐμὸν καλόν.

AETHRA: Son, might I speak something beneficial to you and to the city?
THESEUS: Of course. Even women can talk good sense.
AETHRA: I'm afraid you will disapprove of what I have to say.
THESEUS: You've spoken of a shameful thing: to hide good advice from loved ones.
AETHRA: Then I will not, by keeping silent, blame myself later
on the grounds that I kept silent wrongly now,
nor out of fear that it is useless for women to speak well
will I neglect my own good through fear. Eur. *Suppliant Women* 293–300

Theseus certainly believes that Aethra is afraid, and Foley reads this exchange as bona fide reluctance on Aethra's part. But might not Aethra's words also be a deliberate teasing of Theseus' attention? By stating that she is fearful, she places the burden of her speech on The-

[6] Foley (1993), 118.

seus, manipulating him into demanding that she speak. Having made such a demand, he cannot then criticize her for what she has to say. Furthermore, Aethra invokes the ideology behind the convention of female silence—that it is useless for women to make a good speech—and by acknowledging it, she can move beyond it. The situation is grave enough that silence, which would be operative in normal circumstances, would here explicitly be wrong (*kakôs*, 298). By appealing to the blame she would incur for not saying what she knows is good, she assures Theseus that the present circumstances warrant her interference. She then explains why Theseus should accept Adrastus' plea, and Theseus assents, persuaded that his mother has a clearer sense of what is best for the community and for himself.[7] The correctness of Aethra's views is indisputable, but it is received without bias because she apologized for her involvement and emphasized the extraordinary circumstances that required her speech.

Conversely, a tragic woman's failure to apologize can negatively affect the reception of her speech, even if her knowledge is accurate or her opinions well founded. In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the manly Clytemnestra is considered smug for assuming she can speak by virtue of her power as queen. The old men of the chorus dismiss her report of the fall of Troy as unreliable (268) and accuse her of trusting dreams (274) and rumors (276), and they purport that the rumors voiced by women swiftly disappear (487). Clytemnestra's news of Troy's fall is, in fact, true, but her delivery of that knowledge without apology is one of the reasons the men refuse to believe her. In a similar vein, in Euripides' *Andromache*, Menelaus enters the place where Andromache is supplicating at an altar. When Andromache vilifies Menelaus without apology, the chorus of neighboring women is shocked and warns her that she has spoken to excess for what a woman should say in front of men (364).[8]

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[7] There is an extent to which Theseus exemplifies the tragic *topos* of the wise and sympathetic character taking advice from his or her social inferiors. The Nurse in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* asks if it is proper for the free to learn from the thoughts of slaves as she gives advice to Deianeira; and Deianeira herself confirms that it is proper, since what the Nurse has said is worthy of the free (*Women of Trachis* 52–63). In contrast, the unsympathetic Creon of *Antigone* rejects the advice of his inferiors (niece, son, sentry) throughout the play. In Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, then, the theater audience may be primed from the beginning of the scene for Theseus, as the sympathetic leader, to ask his mother for advice.

[8] Nevertheless, there are other times when women's speech in male space is not problematized. In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King,* Jocasta appears to have a certain status

Apologies are a convention by which Euripides permits his tragic women's involvement in fictional male spaces and mitigates male characters' disapproval. However, what follows are analyses of two plays which do not attempt such mitigation, but actually thematize the awkwardness of women out of place.

Evadne in Euripides' Suppliant Women

When Evadne rushes onto the stage of Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, no one in the theater audience is prepared for her. Her name has not been mentioned in the entire play before her entrance, and after her shocking suicide, it is never mentioned again. Until this scene, the plot has dealt with supplication, political debates, a war, and a funeral, including a funeral speech over dead warriors; yet those are all mundane in comparison with the arrival of this woman who, decked out like a bride, runs in like a bacchant and stations herself atop a rocky crag above her husband's funeral pyre, intending to jump. Even more surprisingly, the woman's father (a king also hitherto unmentioned) arrives immediately in search of her. Unable to recognize her suicidal tendencies, he asks her questions; she gives answers that sound ironic. When their exchange has reached the point that he forbids her even to speak of killing herself, she leaps from her cliff into the flaming pyre and burns to death. The scene is gripping, grisly, and shocking.

For two people who should know each other very well, Iphis and Evadne fail to communicate with every word, and this miscommunication increases with every utterance. Evadne's burdensome task is to make herself understood by second-guessing how her father will interpret what she says. There is a rich dramatic irony that pervades the short but bristling scene: the theater audience is fully aware of Evadne's suicidal intentions, but Iphis must learn them piecemeal, through a disjointed question and answer, all the time having to shout up to his daughter who is hovering on a rock above her husband's pyre. Evande

whereby no one criticizes her for speaking. When women are suppliants, they do not apologize for their presence or for speaking; supplication itself is a plea for protection, and an apology in this context would be an ineffectual modesty. It is for this reason that female suppliants do not use the rhetorical ploy that they are unaccustomed to speaking, or that they know a woman's virtue is silence. Cf. the chorus of Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, and Megara in *Heracles*.

attempts to explain her suicide in ethical terms (*eukleia, kallinikos, aretê, euboulia*) which have different applications for men and women, but which Evadne applies in a non-traditional (indeed, a heroic) way to herself; as a result, her father finds such words from a woman's mouth inscrutable. The end-product is a frustrating struggle between a man and a woman to control language and its meaning.

The episode begins when Evadne, dressed in wedding garb, climbs atop the rock and sings her monody.[9] Immediately she recalls her wedding day with images of light (*phengos, aiglê, hêlios*, 990–991) and grandeur, e.g., how the city of Argos raised up her happiness tower-high with songs (*aoidais eudaimonias epyrgôse*, 997–998). She announces that she has left that city with its happy past and come to Eleusis, running like a bacchant, in order to join her husband Capaneus in a fiery death. She describes this intended suicide as a kind of sexual union (or re-union); she speaks of joining her body with her husband's (indeed, 'mingling,' *posei symmeixasa philôi*, 1020), laying skin against skin (1021), and becoming fused (*syntêchtheis*, 1029). This entrance is both shocking and transgressive; as Daniel Mendelsohn observed:

> Here Evadne refers quite explicitly to her own body not as the fertile site of procreation but rather as the seat of sensual pleasures: intercourse, skin-to-skin contact. [...] This preference for (metaphorically) erotic activity over procreative and domestic responsibility also mirrors the priority of a maenad.[10]

In a play that has largely dealt with death and the burial of the dead as a cause for somber grief and nostalgic praise for the honest dispositions of the deceased, the sudden shift to an erotic attitude to death is very startling. Adrastus in his eulogy had paved the way towards erotic thoughts, by mentioning Parthenopaeus, that boy *eidos exochôtatos* ("preeminent in beauty," 889), who had many lovers and was pursued by many women, yet never offended any of them (899–900). But there is a distinct difference between a king remembering a dead soldier as an object of desire when he was alive, and a wife wanting to join her husband's burning corpse in an erotic union. Adrastus' comments are endearing in the context of a funeral speech; but Evadne's desires, introduced with the image of her running around the coun-

[9] Actually, the text does not specifically state that she is dressed as a bride, though it is the most logical conclusion of Iphis' reaction in lines 1054 and 1056 to what he considers the inappropriateness of her attire.

[10] Mendelsohn (2002), 201.

tryside dressed as a bride, shockingly imply a woman out of control. Yet Evadne is not undetermined in her actions; at the same time that she physically and figuratively crosses spatial and sexual boundaries, Evadne is clear about where she hopes to arrive after crossing those boundaries. To begin with, she casts herself into a new but paradoxical role of bride: a typical role for a young woman, but an atypical one for a widow next to her husband's pyre. Furthermore, this bride is suicidal; her sexual innuendoes of "joining" her husband refer not to the marriage bed, but to consuming fire. Her death will be a kind of re-marriage, or a marriage to death; she explicitly mentions torches and nuptials (*itô phôs gamoi te*, 1025), and says she "will come to the marriage-chambers (*thalamoi*) of Persephone" (1022).[11] The cultural association of the wedding with the funeral—indeed, a literary trope of marriage to death—certainly frames this scene. Nicole Loraux (1985), Richard Seaford (1987) and Rush Rehm (1994) have shown that tragedy repeatedly equates the death of women (especially virgins) with marriage to Hades; inasmuch as marriage is the proper final phase of a woman's maturity, virgins who are killed before they could marry in life are allowed to achieve that mature status through a figurative marriage to death.[12] But Evadne's role is decidedly different, as throughout the scene her struggle to control the name of the ritual (wedding or funeral) is implicated in a fight to control language. She names herself not as the bride of death, but as the bride of Capaneus.

Her unprepared entrance is striking enough; even more so is the news that her intended death is an act she hopes will win her *renown*. She will jump from the rock "for the sake of glory" (*eukleias charin*, 1015), and when her husband becomes fused with her, it will be with a noble wife (*gennaias alochoio*, 1030). There is no question that heroic death can earn a woman renown in tragedy; one need only compare Alcestis (who is praised for yielding her life for her husband) and the

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[11] Rehm (1994), 110 observed very neatly that this reference to Persephone has interesting thematic overtones, since the drama is set at a temple of Demeter in Eleusis, the home of the mysteries surrounding Persephone's abduction.

[12] Seaford (1987), 107 recorded what he called the "equivocal" elements of the marriage and funeral rituals: "…in both wedding and funeral the girl is washed, anointed, and given special *peploi* and a special *stephanos* in order to be conveyed on an irreversible, torchlit journey (on a cart) accompanied by song, and to be abandoned by her kin to an unknown dwelling, an alien bed, and the physical control (*cheir epi karpôi*) of an unknown male." In the context of death, this unknown male is, of course, Hades. Seaford also pointed to the appearance of this marriage-to-death trope in epitaphs and cited Peek (1955), 658, 1162, 1238, 1551, 1553, and 1989.

host of Euripidean virgin suicides, like Macaria, Iphigenia, etc. What is not clear in *Suppliant Women*, however, is whether Evadne's type of suicide is, in fact, heroic. In tragedy, the desire to kill oneself after the death of a spouse is normal. Admetus, for example, contemplates it (*Alcestis* 864–867, 897–899, and the chorus gives more explicit suggestions at 227–229). Hecuba at *Trojan Women* 1012–1014 taunts Helen (who claims she had been taken from Menelaus by force) for not attempting to hang or stab herself out of longing for her husband, as would any noble wife, or *gennaia gynê*—significantly, the same terminology Evadne applies to herself (above, *Suppliant Women* 1030). If Evadne had hanged herself in the privacy of her home after Capaneus' death, it would have been understandable and pathetic. However, jumping into a funeral pyre and expecting to be praised for it is not the Greek way. Such dramatic disposal of women might fit a culture in which remarriage in the upper classes is very rare and widows are an unwanted commodity (as could be argued for the case of the *suttee* in India, to which Evadne's suicide has often been compared); but widows in Greek myth often remarry (admittedly, however, with tragic consequences, as with Jocasta, Clytemnestra, or Hermione in *Andromache)*. In real life, younger Athenian widows generally remarried. At Lysias 32.6 (*Against Diogeiton*), for example, a man's will specifically sets aside money for his wife's dowry upon her remarriage. Inasmuch as Evadne's suicide follows the patterns of marriage to death, at the same time it ventures beyond it by redesigning normal social practice, i.e., by hoping for praise in ending widowhood through violent and public death. By the end of her monody, therefore, she has at least made clear her motives for suicide and the roles she is adopting: she is a widow who has become a new bride, and a woman who seeks renown and noble reputation for choosing to die with her husband.

The audience must wonder why Euripides chose to invent such a woman. Since there is no known mythology concerning the wife of Capaneus (other than that she was probably the mother of Sthenelus), Evadne's suicide seems to be another of Euripides' famous innovations. Inasmuch as Evadne is a 'new' character, she invents herself as the scene continues. The audience can only hope to learn more information about her in the stichomythia that will follow—and they do—but Euripides gives the audience a unique advantage during that stichomythia. Evadne's interlocutor, her father—a man who *should* know everything about her—actually seems to know less about her than the audience does. For the audience knows (if they have paid attention) that

Evadne is intending to jump. Iphis does not (though he *should* be able to guess).

When the chorus of Argive mothers announces Iphis' arrival, they say:

καὶ μὴν ὅδ' αὐτὸς σὸς πατὴρ βαίνει πέλας
γεραιὸς Ἶφις ἐς νεωτέρους λόγους,
οὓς οὐ κατειδὼς πρόσθεν ἀλγήσει κλύων.

CHORUS: And see, here your father himself is coming near,
the aged Iphis, (to hear) your strange words,
which he does not yet know and will grieve to hear.

Eur. *Suppliant Women* 1031–1033

Such a welcome to Iphis bodes ill, and immediately establishes an expectation that Iphis will have a negative emotional reaction to Evadne's presence, and that it will all end in disaster. When Iphis enters, he confirms this sense of doom by referring to himself as *dystalas* ("unfortunate"); but in doing so, he relates some very odd information:

ὦ δυστάλαιναι, δυστάλας δ' ἐγὼ γέρων,
ἥκω διπλοῦν πένθημ' ὁμαιμόνων ἔχων,
τὸν μὲν θανόντα παῖδα Καδμείων δορὶ
Ἐτέοκλον ἐς γῆν πατρίδα ναυσθλώσων νεκρὸν
ζητῶν τ' ἐμὴν παῖδ', ἣ δόμων ἐξώπιος
βέβηκε πηδήσασα Καπανέως δάμαρ,
θανεῖν ἐρῶσα σὺν πόσει· χρόνον μὲν οὖν
τὸν πρόσθ' ἐφρουρεῖτ' ἐν δόμοις· ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγὼ
φυλακὰς ἀνῆκα τοῖς παρεστῶσιν κακοῖς,
βέβηκεν. ἀλλὰ τῇδέ νιν δοξάζομεν
μάλιστ' ἂν εἶναι. φράζετ' εἰ κατείδετε.

IPHIS: Unfortunate women, I too am unfortunate, an old man;
I have come in double sorrow for close kin:
First, my son who was killed by the Theban spear,
Eteoclus, I will transport as a corpse to his native land;
And then, I'm looking for my daughter, Capaneus' wife,
Who leapt up and is gone away from home,
Wanting to die with her husband. In former days,
She was watched in the house; but since I
Let go my guard(s) because of the present troubles,
She is gone! But I thought she
Would most likely be here. Tell me if you've seen her.

Eur. *Suppliant Women* 1034–1044

The phrase *phylakas anêka* (1042) is tricky. It either refers to Iphis "letting down his guard" (i.e., being distracted), or dismissing actual guards that he had posted over his daughter. Ruth Scodel took the latter

interpretation, that "Evadne was able to run away because the difficult circumstances caused [Iphis] to dismiss the guards who had formerly watched her," and cited *Orestes* 443, *Hypsipyle* fr. 20/21.12 (= 754b12 in Cropp's edition), and *Heracles* 83 as other examples in Euripides of border guards who prevent characters from fleeing.[13] Mendelsohn also took the passage to imply physical guards, "literaliz[ing] what is usually thought to have been a purely figurative and conventional confinement of women to the interior of her home," and connects this image of Evadne "under lock and key" to the greater theme of her deliberate crossing of boundaries.[14] But if Iphis did post guards, there are some narrative problems; why did he do it? Did Evadne want to join her husband in battle? Did she threaten to do bodily harm to herself? The present scene shows Evadne as a woman of impulse; but was that also the case in the past? It is unclear, but the *oun* (1039) suggests that there was enough potential harm for Iphis to assume that *now* she is wanting to die with her husband. The "present troubles" that distracted Iphis into dismissing his guards was presumably the news that the Seven were dead and their bodies ready to be buried. But again, it is uncertain. The verisimilitude of the narrative breaks down. How much time has passed to allow a messenger to travel to Argos to say that the bodies were at Eleusis? How did Evadne learn the news first, with enough time to get here moments before her father? Did she go wandering around the countryside all by herself (like a true bacchant?), or did she have an escort? Did she perhaps leave Argos at the same time as the chorus of suppliant mothers? Iphis' *phylakas anêka* is a good example of a 'local motivation,' which Scodel explains as "an expository element or plot device that is introduced only at the moment it is needed and is not developed as the narrative proceeds."[15] It is a common feature of ancient narrative, as opposed to modern realistic narrative. The information is peculiar and limited, so that all the audience can infer is what Iphis tells the chorus.

Apparently, then, Iphis has been looking for Evadne because he thinks she is "wanting to die with her husband" (*thanein erôsa sun posei*, 1040). Therefore two things are clear—Iphis expects Evadne to be here at Eleusis, and he knows she wants to die. An audience might expect the scene to play out as an emotional roller-coaster ride, building up

[13] Scodel (1999), 96.
[14] Mendelsohn (2002), 199.
[15] Scodel (1999), 12.

to a climax where something disastrous happens. Formally speaking, this is indeed what happens; but Euripides laces this gradual escalation of suspense with a humorous twinge, bound up in bumbling attempts to communicate. When Iphis asks the suppliant mothers if they have seen her, Evadne herself shouts down to her father and alerts him to her lofty spot. He finds his daughter in a position which puts physical distance between her and everyone else, and makes her the focus of all attention—a position one would not expect a Greek woman to assume. Faced with a strange and inexplicable situation, he makes the understatement, 'What are you doing here?' The way he asks it borders on stuttering, audibly marked by the 't-t-t' sound of the repetition of the interrogative *tis*, as if the surprise of seeing Evadne on the rock has robbed him of his ability to speak lucidly: *teknon, tis aura? tis stolos? tinos charin?* (1048).

Evadne responds that she does not want her father to hear of her plans because he might become angry (*orgên labois*,1050) and would not be a wise judge (*kritês sophos*, 1053). Right away Iphis seems to confirm this latter opinion by misinterpreting everything he hears and sees. He asks her why she is dressed the way she is; it is confusing to see her in wedding garb at a funeral. She replies in 1055 that her apparel signifies "something glorious" (*ti kleinon*), and given that she had sung earlier in her monody about achieving *eukleia* through her remarriage to her dead husband, her apparel is extremely appropriate. The audience can figure this out, but Iphis cannot, and thus there begins a long struggle for control of language, a search for common words that can enable father and daughter to communicate. Evadne's statement about "something glorious" completely escapes her father, who continues to be confused by her physical appearance and remarks simply, "You don't *look* the part of the grieving wife" (*hôs ouk ep' andri penthimos prepeis horan*, 1056).[16]

Evadne tries to explain that her dress *does* have appropriate significance, that it signals *ti pragma neochmon* ("something new or novel"), meaning, of course, her re-marriage to her husband through her suicide. Iphis still cannot comprehend; he asks in 1058, "And therefore you appear before a tomb and a pyre?" as if the very act of being outside in this ridiculous outfit on that ridiculous rock is the "new" thing

[16] This concern for the appearance of clothing is a thematic echo of the opening of the play. Theseus remarks to his mother that the suppliant women are not attired for a festival (*peplômat' ou theôrika*, 97), as one might expect at Eleusis. See Barbara Goff (1995), 69.

she is referring to. Though Evadne makes subtle references to her suicide, Iphis completely misinterprets her words; nor is this surprising, given the oddity of the situation. As he has just said, Iphis expects that Evadne is planning to die with her husband; but jumping into a burning pyre is not a Greek custom. Though Iphis *should know* what Evadne is doing in Eleusis, his confusion results from the manner she has chosen for her death.

Evadne's subsequent responses use ethical terms that have scope for ambiguity in meaning. Evadne is not using intentionally veiled or vague language to confuse her father; instead, her desire to communicate her plans is genuine, but is fraught with difficulty because the burden is on her to make herself understood. Expressing things at a level to which she hopes Iphis can relate, Evadne next describes herself as having come to this spot *kallinikos*, a word that often carries masculine connotations, such as a martial or athletic victory.[17] Mendelsohn noted the echo of the word in the play itself, inasmuch as Evadne "places herself in a class with none other than Theseus himself, who had been addressed as *kallinikos* by Adrastos in the first episode."[18] Therefore, *kallinikos* is presumably a word and concept which Iphis—a king—could understand. Iphis doesn't; hearing the word from the mouth of a woman confuses him, so he asks her what sort of victory (*nikê*) she is winning. He insists, "I want to know it from you" (*mathein chrêizô sethen*, 1060), implying that Evadne has much more explaining to do before he can catch on. She gives the answer which is appropriate for her: she will be victorious over "all women that the sun has ever shined upon" (*pasas gynaikas has dedorken hêlios*, 1061), reiterating in spirit the end of her monody when she hoped her marriage would be a model for Argives to come.

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[17] For the use of *kallinikos* as suggestive of a martial victory, compare Pindar *Isthmian* 1.12 (*kallinikon kudos*), and (as a divine epithet) Archilochus 119 (*tênella ô kallinike chair' anax Hêraklees*). In Euripides, *kallinikos* appears most frequently in the *Heracles* (in the contexts of martial victory) and *Phoenician Women*. In the latter, its meaning is often ironic; the victory polluted by fratricide is oddly called *kallinikos* (see Mastronarde 1994: 443, n. 1048). In two other plays, Euripides uses the word to describe women, lending them a disturbing masculine quality: Medea is *kallinikos* over her enemies (*Medea* 765) and is described by the Nurse as a woman against whom no one can be *kallinikos* (*Medea* 45). The chorus of *Bacchae* describes Agave (having killed her son in her madness) as calling upon Dionysus as *kallinikos*; Agave and her train also raise a cry that is *kallinikon* (*Bacchae* 1147, 1161). See also Mendelsohn (2002), 204.

[18] Mendelsohn (2002), 203–204.

Uncertain what is meant by being victorious over "all women," Iphis utters the most alarming question in the stichomythia, one that highlights the connection between gender and misunderstanding: *ergois Athanas ê phrenôn euboulíâi?* ("In handiworks of Athene, or in wise judgment?" 1062). Evadne has just said that she has come to this place to celebrate a victory; how could she win a victory over other women in handiworks next to a funeral pyre? No one, to my knowledge, has fully remarked on the strangeness of this line. This is largely because weaving and *euboulia* ("wise judgment," one sense of which could be the keeping of household accounts) taken alone seem to relate to traditional expectations about fifth century Athenian women, and some readers might be tempted to read Iphis as simply making a general statement. In such a reading, Iphis' word *euboulia* might be as generic as Evadne's chosen vocabulary (or is perhaps offered as a better alternative to the daring behavior that Evadne is presently showing), and Iphis might not yet have discerned Evadne's motives, and therefore he assumes she is using *nikê* in a traditional feminine context.[19] But if so, it is precisely that generality which is strange. The woman is standing on a ledge above a burning funeral pyre! This is *not* the place to display those types of accomplishments. What is happening is that Iphis reacts only to the words he hears, and not the context in which they are said. He does not recognize Evadne's attempt to apply the word *nikê* to a feminine context in this new and bizarre way.[20] One might suppose that Iphis is stalling, saying anything—even the ridiculous!—to keep Evadne from jumping; but if that were true, there are surely much more useful things Iphis could say—e.g., "Come down from there!"—instead of asking nonsensical questions.

Evadne answers in 1063 that she will be victorious in *aretê*—another word with a host of meanings—but this time she qualifies it explic-

[19] Cf. Mendelsohn (2002: 204, n. 114): "*Euboulia* here seems to be a specifically feminine virtue. It has already been expressly opposed to macho *eukardia*; and elsewhere in his oeuvre (e.g. *Phoen.* 746) Euripides articulates a stark contrast between *euboulia* and *tharsos*, the latter being the very boldness that marks transgressive, 'heroized' women in the political plays."

[20] Another example of the application of *nikê* to a feminine context in a new way is Sophocles' *Electra* 950ff. Electra argues that she and her sister should kill Aegisthus themselves, taking up the masculine role of avenger in the absence of Orestes. After their *nikê* against Aegisthus, Electra argues that she and her sister will win the kind of *kleos* that will inspire men to seek to marry them. Evadne's application of *nikê* to herself is much odder; her *nikê* will consist in outdoing other women in loyalty to her husband, but this will only be achievable by death.

itly: she will die with her husband (*posei gar synthanousa keisomai*). This is exactly what Iphis said Evadne was wanting to do when she left Argos. This is the moment when Iphis *should* recognize what Evadne's plans are, what they have always been—but he doesn't! Instead, he blubbers, *ti phêis? ti tout' ainigma sêmainei sathron?* ("What are you saying? What rotten thing does this riddle point to?" 1064). The word *sathron* ("rotten") appears elsewhere in the Euripidean corpus to describe deceptive or corrupt speech, as at *Rhesus* 639 (where Athena tells Diomedes that she will deceive Paris with *sathroi logoi* into thinking she is Aphrodite), and *Hecuba* 1190 (where Hecuba defends herself to Agamemnon after blinding Polymestor; Hecuba says that if a man has done evil, his *logoi* should be *sathroi* and not be able to speak unjust things well). In Iphis' case, the use of the word *sathron* indicates that he believes something is very much out of order, even unsound.[21] Evadne is no longer kept at home, but has burst into a public space where men (Theseus and Adrastus) have been trying to curtail the chorus women's lamentations. Evadne's speech—a woman's speech out of place—is riddling to the male ear, especially when she uses language that has both masculine and feminine applications. Iphis attempts to put Evadne's words into a familiar feminine context; in the case of *aretê*, he cannot see it in any context which involves suicide. As a result, Iphis and Evadne speak in two completely different discourses. Evadne, a woman, envisions herself heroically and explains herself in terms of victory (*kallinikos*), reputation (*eukleia*), glorious deeds (*ti kleinon*), and virtue (*aretê*); in contrast to the common associations of the death of maidens and their marriage to death, Evadne—a wife, not a virgin—has intentionally combined funeral and wedding into a new ritual (the *neochmon* of line 1057) which she hopes will earn her feminine renown. But Iphis, a man, finds such language from the mouth of a woman incomprehensible and is concerned only with Evadne's outward appearance and her being out of place (quite literally; she ran *away* from home).

Finally Evadne helps her father understand the situation she had made so incomprehensible. She says explicitly (but poetically) *âissô thanontos Kapaneôs têndʼ es pyran* ("I am darting into the dead Capaneus' pyre," 1065). The ecstatic verb of motion *âissô* hearkens back nicely to

[21] Collard (1975), 379 noted that, with the mention of Evadne's "unsound" judgment in line 1064, "the irony of 1062 *phrenôn eubouliâi* is only now clear." Mendelsohn (2002), 205 rightly pointed out *sathron*'s thematic echo with the "sick" (*nosountos*) Adrastus at line 227.

her description of herself as a bacchant. The message of the statement is crystal clear: she is going to jump. Iphis' reaction is simply amazing: instead of begging her not to kill herself, or even asking her to stand still lest she fall, he asks her to be silent in front of the present company: *ô thygater, ou mê mython es pollous ereis?* ("Daughter, don't say that, in front of so many people!" 1066). At the very point when Iphis finally realizes the true meaning of her riddle, he asks her to keep quiet. Why?

Collard argued (citing Italie): "Iphis' hope is that Evadne may yet be dissuaded from her plan, if publication can be prevented."[22] But this is only part of it. Iphis does not merely say, "Don't say that!" He adds, *es pollous*, "in front of so many people!" Why should he or Evadne care about an audience? It was certainly a Greek ideal that women not make public displays of themselves, though the funeral was one of the few occasions when their voices were excusable in public, at least in the form of lamentations and cries. Iphis' concern here, then, is with the reception of Evadne's speech, since the content of her replies to his questions has led him to assume that she has gone crazy. If the stage audience (in this case, the chorus of Argive mothers) should learn what she plans to do, she might earn a bad reputation as a crazy woman. It is as if he cannot accept the fact that she will die; instead, on the premise that someone might be able to coax her down to safety, Iphis wants to protect her from being talked about badly.

But what about Evadne's concerns? Is it significant that she speaks in front of so many people about her *aretê, ti kleinon*, and *eukleia?* The prevailing reading of that often invoked passage—Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides 2.45.2—contends that an Athenian woman's greatest renown was in not being talked about by men. But this does not preclude Athenian women (and Euripidean women) from wanting to be talked about in a way that percolated through other women. Inherent to Pericles' oration about women's *aretê* is a distinction between *doxa* (what is thought about a woman) and *kleos* (what is said about a woman):

> On the other hand, if I must say anything on the subject of female excellence (*aretê*) to those of you who will now be in widowhood, it will be all comprised in this brief exhortation. Great will be your glory (*doxa*) in not falling short of your natural character (*physis*); and greatest will be

[22] Collard (1975), 308.

> hers who has the least *kleos* among the men in regard to praise (*aretê*) or blame (*psogos*). Thucydides 2.45.2[23]

A key phrase in this distinction is *en tois arsesi* which can be taken to mean "at male gatherings," that is, at the assembly, law courts, or symposia. That is, women (and Pericles emphasizes war widows, like Evadne herself) should not be talked about at male gatherings. Given that the remarriage of widows could have consequences for the control of the land and property that her children might inherit from their deceased father, bad gossip at male gatherings about a widow's (presumably scandalous) behavior would necessarily bring shame upon her deceased husband, the war hero who died for Athens. This is perhaps the first concern of Pericles—that war widows not become merry widows. None of this precludes women (and widows) from being talked about by other women to men. It certainly does not mean that *dead* women should not be talked about; Schaps (1977) has shown that dead women constitute one of the few categories of women who are actually named in court cases. Furthermore, Pericles says earlier in his oration that Athenian men gossip less than other Greeks:

> We do not get into a state (*di' orgês*) with our next-door-neighbor (*ton pelas*) if he enjoys himself in his own way, nor do we give him the kind of black looks which, though they do no real harm, still do hurt people's feelings. Thucydides 2.37.2

If Pericles is right in this regard, then it would follow that widows need not worry about being talked about by men.[24]

On the other hand, Greek women could always be talked about by other women, so that being the subject of women's gossip should have been one of a Greek woman's greatest concerns. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Virginia Hunter's and David J. Cohen's studies on Greek gossip as social control concluded that Athenian women, through networks of acquaintances and neighbors, had the opportunity to exchange information and opinions about individuals and families and the capacity to affect reputations.[25] Evadne recognizes the chorus of

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[23] This formulation contrasts, of course, with the *aieimnêstos doxa* ("forever-remembered glory") that Pericles in the same oration says belongs to the men who, not content to deprive the city of their *aretê*, subsequently died in war for Athens' sake (Thucydides 2.43.2–3).

[24] However, in tragedy this is occasionally problematized. As the next section will demonstrate, at *Iphigenia in Aulis* 999–1001 Achilles describes the gossip in which idle troops could engage.

[25] Hunter (1990, 1994) and Cohen (1989, 1991).

women as her neighbors, capable of spreading good gossip back to Argos. In 1067 she wants all the Argives (*pantas Argeious*) to hear of her. The gender of *Argeious* is masculine (as is the *pollous* of 1066), which can denote either an all-male body, or a mixed group of men and women; the latter is more appropriate here. It is significant that Evadne says *Argives*, and not *Eleusinians* or *Greeks*. She realizes, as does Iphis, that the chorus of Argive mothers is her audience, and she relies on them to spread word of her *eukleia* back home (to other Argive women, and filtered through women to men) once she is dead. She knows she will die, and so talk is what she wants most of all. Iphis' concern for silence is comical because at this point, it is too late; he and Evadne have been shouting at each other over the space between cliff and ground level for over twenty lines, in front of witnesses. If Iphis is worried about Evadne earning a bad reputation for speaking so boldly in public, his worry is ill-timed.

Iphis' command for silence falls on deaf ears. When he orders her not to jump ("But neither will I allow you to do this!" 1068), she informs him emphatically (οὐ μή) that it is out of his control, then falls to her death:

> ὅμοιον· οὐ γὰρ μὴ κίχῃς μ' ἑλὼν χερί.
> καὶ δὴ παρεῖται σῶμα, σοὶ μὲν οὐ φίλον,
> ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ τῷ συμπυρουμένῳ πόσει.

> EVADNE: All the same; you cannot reach me with your hand.
> Already my body falls—a thing/body not dear to you,
> But dear to me and to my husband who will burn with me.
>
> Eur. *Suppliant Women* 1069–1071

It is difficult to render in English the full double entendre of Evadne's parting gesture, what Mendelsohn described as "the most emphatic rejection of conventional constraints on woman's spatial and hence corporeal autonomy."[26] The adjective *philon* of 1070 does double duty, both modifying Evadne's *sôma* (which would naturally be "dear" to her dead husband's eroticized corpse and not "dear" to a father), and acting as a substantive in apposition to the clause *pareitai sôma* (so that Evadne's leap is an action that is dear to her beloved husband, and not to her father). Mendelsohn (following Wilamowitz) also noted how *philon* can mean simply "one's own," so that:

[26] Mendelsohn (2002), 206.

> Evadne indeed makes that body her "own" in a way that, according to her, no woman has ever done. Flying into space in order to be joined once again to her husband's body, she forever escapes her father's grasp and all it represents.[27]

Flying away is precisely what Evadne does; Iphis mourns her briefly, and the play never mentions her again.

What is the purpose of Iphis' bumbling misunderstandings? They reinforce the real *im*possibility of Evadne's new heroic role, and the inability of women's language to be understood when speaking in these new parameters. When Evadne tried to verbalize concepts like *ti kleinon* (1055) and *nikê* (1059) in an untraditional way, Iphis could only assume those words referred to traditional female domestic virtues, and not to her marriage to death.[28] On the one hand, Iphis cannot be held too accountable for his inability to interpret Evadne's words, if her application of them is so new and strange; but his forgivable lack of understanding and his bumbling manner of trying to communicate do not detract from the ultimate message of the scene, which is itself another one of Euripides' many 'incongruities.' Euripides creates a heroine who wants to re-invent what it means to be a heroine; but Iphis' confused reaction to Evadne makes the theater audience even more uneasy about its own understanding of Evadne's words, and of what exactly she was trying to prove. Her speech is not merely riddling to Iphis, but riddling to the audience, too. Though the audience knows she intends to jump, it is not offered a full and convincing account of her reasons. She appears to be motivated by love and grief; she wants to earn glory for dying with her husband, to be victorious in virtue over all the women in the world, and she takes pride in being seen and heard as she dies. But is that enough for her suicide to make sense? Silvia Montiglio argued:

> But her quest for glory remains a mere fantasy: far from praising her loudly proclaimed suicide, the chorus regard it as a "horrible," "daring" act. This disapproving judgment questions Evadne's own interpretation of her suicide and denies her the immortal glory that she hoped to win by her words as well as by her death.[29]

Montiglio's argument arose from her interest in tragic women who make silent departures before suicide, which is a particularly Sopho-

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[27] Mendelsohn (2002), 207.

[28] Foley (1993), 42 suggests that the chorus' choice of the word *pantolmon* (1075) is a further masculine description of Evadne's act.

[29] Montiglio (2000), 244.

clean phenomenon; Evadne is the Euripidean counter example, making an outrageous verbal display before killing herself. If Montiglio is correct that the Argive mothers genuinely disapprove of Evadne's suicide when they call it both a *deinon ergon* and a *pantolmon ergon* (*Suppliant Women* 1072 and 1075), then it would appear that Evadne had miscalculated in wanting all the Argives to know about her (1067). In any case, the play forgets about her, and the spectator is never sure whether Evadne succeeded in becoming that new heroine, or whether she was just some kind of nut. By creating the possibility of a new type of tragic heroine, and then killing her off, Euripides sends a disturbing message to his audience. Surely there is something wrong in a world where war widows are driven to suicide after the loss of their husbands and then take pleasure in the act! Yet no one in the play learns from Evadne's disquieting example. Her death is followed immediately by Iphis' lament, and then by a dirge in which the orphans of the Seven join their grandmothers and swear revenge on Thebes. The tragedy of this ending is that instead of stopping the cycle of violence, the next generation swears to renew it, so that in the future there will be more childless mothers, more bodies to bury, more orphaned sons and more Evadnes—crazy or not—who kill themselves.

Iphigenia in Aulis

Female propriety is the key to understanding the complexities of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and interestingly it is Clytemnestra—a woman known from Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and other versions of the Orestes myth as the transgressive, 'manly' woman—who in Euripides' play is most concerned with doing the proper womanly thing in any given situation. The challenge for her is that she and her daughter are in a space where female propriety is most difficult to preserve: an army camp, a male space where free married women and their daughters simply do not belong. A chorus of fifteen sight-seeing women from nearby Chalcis manage to maintain an official invisibility in this camp, but the queen and princess of Argos, who are furthermore the sister and niece of the abducted Helen, cannot avoid being out of place, nor can they fail to be concerned with being looked at by men. Given this setting, the intrigue by Agamemnon to lure the women to that space is the promise of a ritual (namely, marriage) where being looked at is socially allowable, and which would require their participation—all the time disguising

that other horrible ritual (namely, human sacrifice) which also literally *requires* his daughter.

Iphigenia in Aulis is one of the few plays to involve an intrigue plotted by a man against a woman—in this case, father against daughter. As it stands, the extant Euripidean corpus contains a small number of male schemers: Menelaus in *Andromache*, Orestes in both *Electra* and *Orestes*, Xuthus in *Ion*, and the god Dionysus in *Bacchae*. With the exception of the enormously successful Dionysus, the mortal male schemers fare rather poorly. Not only do they need the advice or instigation of female kin (Menelaus' daughter Hermione and Orestes' sister Electra) to become schemers in the first place, but their plans also backfire. Menelaus is thwarted by the arrival of Peleus; Xuthus' plans are undone by Creusa's interference; in *Electra*, the murder of his mother brings Orestes unforeseen unbearable guilt; and in his name play, Orestes' plans go so awry that Apollo *ex machina* has to arrest him before he burns the house down. The wily Odysseus, the greatest schemer of them all, is not very prominent in what survives of Euripides; his appearance in *Hecuba* is less as a schemer than a crafty rhetorician who justifies a decision that has already been made; and even if he had planned on tricking Hecuba into relinquishing her daughter, he would have been out-maneuvered by Polyxena's heroic willingness to die. Odysseus also appeared in Euripides' fragmentary *Philoctetes* (performed with *Medea* in 431 BCE), a play apparently without any female characters; this would have afforded Odysseus (who is most certainly disguised in this drama) the opportunity to let his scheming skills shine.[30] Not only are there more women in tragedy who scheme, but they also have a higher success rate and need little persuading. Medea wronged by her husband has no qualms about plotting his ruin, and the embittered Electra does not shirk to murder her mother, but Euripides' Agamemnon—a man—is a poor schemer. His moments of indecision in the first scenes concerning the letter he sent to Clytemnestra about the fake 'marriage' (115–162), his *agôn* with Menelaus in which both

[30] Odysseus is also mentioned at *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1362 as being at the head of the Greek mob, rushing to the tents to lay hands on Iphigenia; Achilles says Odysseus follows the army's orders, but also his own choice. At *Trojan Women* 721, it is Odysseus who (off-stage) urges the Greeks to murder Astyanax. In neither case is there any indication that Odysseus is weaving an intricate plot. I leave aside Odysseus' role in *Rhesus* (which may not be by Euripides) or in *Cyclops* (which is not a tragedy). The Sophoclean Odysseus (*Ajax, Philoctetes*) is much more successful, even paradigmatic, as a schemer.

brothers change their own resolves within the same argument (334–541), and his painful reunion with Iphigenia in which her questions about marriage are answered by his sadly ironical answers about the rituals to come and his pain in losing her (640–685)—all these things are indicative of his unsuitability for the role he must play.

Euripides' decision to develop his characters as he did is in some ways a deliberate revision (almost a reversal) of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, inasmuch as *Iphigenia in Aulis* consciously anticipates the myth of the *Oresteia*. In *Agamemnon*, the chorus of Argive elders in the *parodos* relates what it has heard about Iphigenia's sacrifice—an event which, in the context of that drama, took place some ten years ago. The elders do not mention explicitly any deception on Agamemnon's part to lure his daughter to Aulis with promises of a marriage.[31] What they do emphasize is Agamemnon's choice between two evils: kill his own daughter to appease Artemis, or abandon the expedition which had been ordained by Zeus. He recognized that to kill his child was a horrific act of pollution, and yet he did it anyway, and after having decided, became reckless and impious in his mind—the opposite of the indecisive and guilt-ridden Agamemnon of Euripides. Significantly, Aeschylus' Agamemnon based his final decision concerning the sacrifice on what was 'right' (*themis, Agamemnon* 217).[32] In Euripides' play, Agamemnon is not sure from one moment to the next what is right and what is not. In Aeschylus' play, the plotter—Clytemnestra—was the master of lies that suited the moment; Euripides' Agamemnon, a kind of reluctant plotter, has too much of a conscience to keep up with his plans.

Immediately before the arrival of Clytemnestra and Iphigenia, the chorus women from Chalcis sing an ode that invokes much of the

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[31] Unless the saffron robes (*krokou baphai, Agamemnon* 239) which Iphigenia was wearing can be read as a subtle hint, saffron being the ancient wedding color. Another possible hint is the "first rites" of the ships at *Agamemnon* 227, *proteleia* also being used of marriage rites.

[32] There is, of course, much debate on the exact referent of *themis* in this Aeschylean passage, in part because the meaning of *themis* in archaic Greek wanders between 'what ought to be' and 'what is usual.' The two main interpretations of this passage are 1] that it is *themis* for the army to demand sacrifice of virgin blood in their anger; 2] that it is *themis* for the goddess Artemis to demand sacrifice of virgin blood in her anger. A recent bold emendation by West (1991) reads περιόργως· ἀπὸ δ' αὐδᾷ / Θέμις (*Agamemnon* 216–217), which makes Themis a goddess and would translate "(desires a sacrifice) angrily; but Themis forbids it." In all these cases, Agamemnon is concerned with what is 'right.' What is more, the old men of the chorus keep muttering, "may good turn out in the end!"

vocabulary of virtue that informs Evadne's suicide in *Suppliant Women*. The concepts of *aretê, doxa* and *kleos* are all grouped together along with *aidôs* ("modesty, shame") in one grand observation:

διάφοροι δὲ φύσεις βροτῶν,
διάφοροι δὲ τρόποι· τὸ δ' ὀρ-
θῶς ἐσθλὸν σαφὲς αἰεί·
τροφαί θ' αἱ παιδευόμεναι
μέγα φέρουσ' ἐς τὰν ἀρετάν·
τό τε γὰρ αἰδεῖσθαι σοφία,
†τάν τ' ἐξαλλάσσουσαν ἔχει
χάριν ὑπὸ γνώμας ἐσορᾶν†
τὸ δέον, ἔνθα δόξα φέρει
κλέος ἀγήρατον βιοτᾷ.
μέγα τι θηρεύειν ἀρετάν,
γυναιξὶ μὲν κατὰ Κύ-
πριν κρυπτάν, ἐν ἀνδράσι δ' αὖ
†κοσμος ἔνδον ὁ μυριοπλη-
θὴς† μείζω πόλιν αὔξει.

CHORUS: (singing) *Varied are men's natures,*
and varied are their ways; but that which is
truly noble, is always steadfast;
the rearing that educates a person
contributes greatly to excellence;
for to be modest is wisdom,
and it has the grace (changing
under the influence of intelligence) to perceive
what is necessary, where reputation brings
fame undying to one's life.
It is a great thing to hunt for excellence:
for women, in accordance with a Cyprian goddess
that is discreet; among men, on the other hand,
infinite self-discipline within
makes the city greater. *Iphigenia in Aulis* 558–572

The context of the ode is Helen's adultery and the power of desire, so that comments about women's *aretê* residing in their chastity (literally, "in accordance with a discreet/secret Aphrodite") have a pointed meaning, as do comments about *doxa* and *kleos*. There is no doubt in this play that Helen is the recipient of great negative *doxa* and negative *kleos*, since she was hardly modest in her desires. The chorus' song could as easily apply to Evadne in *Suppliant Women* as to this play. Evadne looks for a *doxa* to bring her *kleos*; the chorus women of Chalcis imply that such a hunt for excellence is achievable by women as well as men, albeit in different realms. Evadne's decision to remain faith-

ful to her dead husband in death may be an extreme example of the chastity expected of women, but it is a kind of chastity nonetheless. The main purpose of the ode here, however, is to foreshadow the nobility of the approaching Iphigenia, for by the play's end she will demonstrate that she is truly noble and modest, but also intelligent enough to perceive that her sacrifice is necessary (*to deon*), so that her reputation (*doxa*) for self-sacrifice will indeed being fame (*kleos*) to her life. She will also achieve an *aretê* with as secret an Aphrodite as possible—namely, she will die a virgin. Clytemnestra too will prove herself an intelligent woman who can look to what is necessary, particularly when it requires her to change her delivery of language; and we all know that, like her sister Helen, she too will earn negative *doxa* and *kleos*. There is one further implication: this concentration of virtue terms at this point in the drama is a signal to the audience that the approaching mother and daughter—like Evadne before them—will face the familiar challenge of controlling language and its meaning.

Clytemnestra appears to be a woman earnestly concerned about what is proper and fitting; but since the very reason for her presence in the army camp is a ruse, she becomes the immediate victim of deliberate miscommunication, so that her concerns about propriety are essentially ineffectual. The women are out of place and unsure how to act in an army camp. For example, upon their arrival, Iphigenia rushes into her father's arms and asks her mother if she is angry at her for this display of affection. Clytemnestra says it is perfectly right, since the girl's love for her father is the greatest among all their children (638–639)—a chilling irony, given her father's plans. Agamemnon sends Iphigenia inside, saying that "it is bitter for girls to be stared at" (*ophthênai korais pikron*, 678–679). In her first stichomythia with her husband, Clytemnestra's interest in what is proper is brought dangerously into the foreground; she is anxious to know who her new son-in-law is (695 ff.), when the wedding will take place and particular rituals will be done (715 ff.). Agamemnon's half-answers are sinister in their dramatic irony:

ΚΛ. προτέλεια δ᾽ ἤδη παιδὸς ἔσφαξας θεᾷ;
ΑΓ. μέλλω· ᾽πὶ ταύτῃ καὶ καθέσταμεν τύχῃ.
ΚΛ. κἄπειτα δαίσεις τοὺς γάμους ἐς ὕστερον;
ΑΓ. θύσας γε θύμαθ᾽ ἁμὲ χρὴ θῦσαι θεοῖς.

CLYTEMNESTRA: Have you already slain (our) child's preliminary sacrifice to the goddess?
AGAMEMNON: I am about to; I am set for this eventuality.

CLYTEMNESTRA: Well then, will you hold the marriage feast later?
AGAMEMNON: When I've sacrificed what I must sacrifice to the gods.

Iphigenia in Aulis 718–721

With classic double entendre, Agamemnon answers Clytemnestra's frank questions about propriety with equally frank hints at the awful truth. Clytemnestra is unknowingly ironic in her choice of words; the *proteleia* of her *paidos* (as subjective genitive) in 718 could mean not only preliminary sacrifices for her daughter's marriage (which is what she intends), but also a sacrifice consisting of her daughter (*paidos* as objective genitive), which is what Agamemnon intends and has set his mind to (*kathestamen*, 719).[33] As much as Clytemnestra looks to Agamemnon for guidance and answers about her proper role in this marriage ritual held in a male space, it is all for nothing, since the marriage will never happen. When Clytemnestra asks where she will make the women's feast, Agamemnon answers it will be exactly where they are now, by the ships (722–723)—an eerie foreshadowing of the pre-sacrificial songs Iphigenia and the female chorus will sing in this very spot near the end of the play. Next, Agamemnon asks her to obey a specific order; Clytemnestra suspiciously asks, "What maternal duty of mine are you usurping?" (728). The exchange which follows highlights Clytemnestra's concern for doing what is proper for a wedding, against Agamemnon's insistence that she leave:

ΑΓ. ἐκδώσομεν σὴν παῖδα Δαναίδων μέτα.
ΚΛ. ἡμᾶς δὲ ποῦ χρὴ τηνικαῦτα τυγχάνειν;
ΑΓ. χώρει πρὸς Ἄργος παρθένους τε τημέλει.
ΚΛ. λιποῦσα παῖδα; τίς δ' ἀνασχήσει φλόγα;
ΑΓ. ἐγὼ παρέξω φῶς ὃ νυμφίοις πρέπει.
ΚΛ. οὐχ ὁ νόμος οὗτος οὐδὲ φαῦλ' ἡγητέα.
ΑΓ. οὐ καλὸν ἐν ὄχλῳ σ' ἐξομιλεῖσθαι στρατοῦ.
ΚΛ. καλὸν τεκοῦσαν τἀμά μ' ἐκδοῦναι τέκνα.
ΑΓ. καὶ τάς γ' ἐν οἴκῳ μὴ μόνας εἶναι κόρας.
ΚΛ. ὀχυροῖσι παρθενῶσι φρουροῦνται καλῶς.
ΑΓ. πιθοῦ. ΚΛ. μὰ τὴν ἄνασσαν Ἀργείαν θεάν.
    ἐλθὼν δὲ τἄξω πρᾶσσε, τἀν δόμοις δ' ἐγώ,
    ἃ χρὴ παρεῖναι νυμφίοισι παρθένοις.

AGAMEMNON: I shall give your daughter away, with the Danaans' help.
CLYTEMNESTRA: And meantime, where should I be staying?

[33] Diggle (1994b), 498 interprets *kathestamen* as a verb of worry, and translates *Iphigenia in Aulis* 719 as, "I am on the point of making the sacrifice: that is the very trouble which currently occupies me."

AGAMEMNON: Go to Argos and protect our young girls.
CLYTEMNESTRA: Leaving my daughter? Who then will lift the marriage torch?
AGAMEMNON: I will raise whatever torch is fitting for the bridal pair.
CLYTEMNESTRA: This is not the custom, nor are these things to be considered slight.
AGAMEMNON: It is wrong for you to mingle with the host of the army.
CLYTEMNESTRA: It is right for me, the mother, to give away my children.
AGAMEMNON: But not for our other girls to be alone in our house.
CLYTEMNESTRA: In secure maiden chambers they are guarded well.
AGAMEMNON: Obey me!
CLYTEMNESTRA: No, by the Argive goddess queen!
You go outside and do your part, I indoors will do
what should be done for young girls marrying. *Iphigenia in Aulis* 729–741

In his attempt to keep Clytemnestra uninvolved with the sacrifice he knows he must carry out, Agamemnon tries to persuade her to return home by appealing to what is *kalon* for a woman in male space and a mother outside of her home. Try as he might, he learns that Clytemnestra feels herself the best judge of her responsibilities; she even reminds him that customs (such as who holds the marriage torch) are not to be considered unimportant (734). Being told that she doesn't belong in an army camp has no initial effect on her determination to take part in her daughter's wedding, though it is an issue that will be reiterated throughout the play. Reminding her of virgin daughters at home alone without maternal guidance is a further unsuccessful ploy to Clytemnestra's sense of propriety; after all, the girls are well guarded (are all princesses of Argos like Evadne in *Suppliant Women*—anxious to escape their guards?). Clytemnestra's understanding of what is *nomos* and *kalon*—namely, that she should prioritize the marriage of her eldest daughter, rather than worry about her others girls alone in Argos—is perfectly correct for the mother of a bride. Ironically, the audience is aware that her knowledge is unnecessary. There is nothing *nomos* or *kalon* about the true marriage—to death—which awaits the unsuspecting Iphigenia.

Man and wife depart, each to their own sphere, to do what each thinks must be done. Unfortunately for Clytemnestra, none of her plans will ever come to pass. That she withdraws from public view into Agamemnon's tent is appropriate; in the following scene she rushes out of the tent, assuming that her action is, once again, appropriate, only to discover herself grossly out of place.

When Clytemnestra meets Achilles for the first time, she hears his voice outside her tent and comes outdoors to greet the man she assumes will soon be her son-in-law (819). Achilles is naturally confused and a bit shocked to find a woman in the middle of an army camp—he even invokes the goddess Modesty (*ô potni' Aidôs*, 821)—but compliments Clytemnestra on her beauty. Specifically, he refers to her appearance as *euprepês* (822), which can mean both "beautiful" and (significantly for Clytemnestra) "fitting." When he learns, however, that she is the wife of King Agamemnon, he tries to get away from her, knowing that it is inappropriate (*aischron*, 830) for him to converse openly with a woman of such status, or, for that matter, for her to express familiarity that could be construed as seduction—she is Helen's sister, after all! As in the case of Evadne and Iphis, Clytemnestra and Achilles speak in two different discourses. Clytemnestra, believing she is doing what is *themis malista* ("most proper," 835) because Achilles will soon be her new *philos*, asks him to take her right hand in his as a good beginning to their new relationship (832). Achilles, finding Clytemnestra's interest in him puzzling and her words inscrutable, wants only to run away (831) and asserts that he would be ashamed to touch what is wrongful for him to touch (834), namely another man's wife. When Clytemnestra reveals that she believes he will be marrying her daughter, Achilles tells her she must be crazy (838). Clytemnestra does not take this to heart, but assures him his modesty is unnecessary, on the premise that it is natural for new grooms to be shy of new in-laws (840). Finally Achilles becomes more explicit, and says he has never heard of any marriage alliance with her daughter (842), to which Clytemnestra's appropriate response is at first confusion, and then utter embarrassment (*aidoumai tade*, 848), to the extent that she can no longer lift her eyes to face Achilles (851).[34] Man and woman then do what is proper in the situation: they both prepare to go their separate ways, and as quickly as possible.

The opportune intervention of her servant begins the shift in Clytemnestra's concern for what is proper, marked by her insistence that the servant not waste time in kissing her hand before telling her what he knows (866). Once she has learned the awful truth that Agamemnon intends to kill their daughter, she changes her speech pattern to suit the moment. Instead of the familiar tone of a *philos* she had used before, she now addresses Achilles with the formality of a suppliant. This sup-

[34] See Cairns (1993), 311 for detailed analysis of the theme of *aidôs* in this scene.

plication is an appropriate impropriety which she must describe as an emotional display to which she has been driven by the extraordinariness of the dilemma. Thus she now states that she is *not* too ashamed (*ouk epaidesthêsomai*, 900) to fall at Achilles' knees, despite (she says) the rift between his divine birth and her mortal nature (899–901). To arouse his pity, she reminds him of her vulnerability as a woman among a camp of men eager for violence (913–914), and she entertains the possibility of bringing Iphigenia out of her tent to beg with her, suggesting that even though it would be unmaidenly (*apartheneuta*, 993), she would still come out if he wished it and "keep her eye free of shame" (*aidous omm' echous' eleutheron*, 994).

In Achilles' opinion, Agamemnon has committed *hubris* against him (961) by using Achilles' name (*onoma*, 947 and 962) in the false marriage that lured the women to Aulis, even though Achilles oddly admits that he would have gone along with the ruse if Agamemnon had asked him. So it is natural that in response he seeks to preserve the name and honor of the women who have been insulted with him. Thus he rules that it is not necessary for Iphigenia to see him as a suppliant; his specific concern is the scandal and filthy gossip in which a crowd of idle troops could eagerly engage (999–1001). It is an odd theatrical moment, highlighting that mother and daughter are on display by coming to this camp at all—yet they completely ignore the presence of the chorus women, who are many more in number, but socially invisible. Achilles agrees to a plan with Clytemnestra: that she should try to dissuade Agamemnon from the sacrifice, while he (Achilles) will try to dissuade the army. When Clytemnestra asks where she can find Achilles if she needs him, he tells her they will choose a place so she can avoid searching among the troops for him, and thus protect the reputation of herself and her father's family (1028–1032). Within one scene, Clytemnestra was ready to push female propriety aside in order to gain Achilles' support; Achilles appropriately restores that propriety back to her.

When Achilles first met Clytemnestra, he found her words unintelligible; but that soon changed once the servant enlightened them with the truth. In this play, it is largely Agamemnon's (the man's) speech which is riddling, and deliberately so. In the second stichomythia between husband and wife, the exchange is even more ironic than before, since Clytemnestra knows and understands her husband's double-speak. Now is her chance to answer riddles with riddles:

ΑΓ. ἔκπεμπε παῖδα δωμάτων πατρὸς μέτα·
ὡς χέρνιβες πάρεισιν ηὐτρεπισμέναι
προχύται τε, βάλλειν πῦρ καθάρσιον χεροῖν,
μόσχοι τε, πρὸ γάμων ἃς θεᾷ πεσεῖν χρεὼν
Ἀρτέμιδι μέλανος αἵματος φυσήματι.
ΚΛ. τοῖς ὀνόμασιν μὲν εὖ λέγεις, τὰ δ' ἔργα σου
οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως χρή μ' ὀνομάσασαν εὖ λέγειν.
χώρει δέ, θύγατερ, ἐκτός—οἶσθα γὰρ πατρὸς
πάντως ἃ μέλλει—χὐπὸ τοῖς πέπλοις ἄγε
λαβοῦσ' Ὀρέστην, σὸν κασίγνητον, τέκνον.

AGAMEMNON: Send our daughter from the tent to join her father,
since the lustral waters have now been prepared
and the barley grains poured forth, to throw by hand on cleansing fire,
and the young bulls which before the wedding must fall for the goddess
Artemis, with a snorting of black blood.
CLYTEMNESTRA: You speak well with words, but as for your actions,
I do not know how I can speak well of them after naming them.
Come outside, daughter—for you know fully
what your father intends—and in the folds of your dress lift up
and bring Orestes, your brother, oh child. *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1110–1117

Just as in their earlier discussion, Agamemnon uses double entendres: the lustral waters and scattered barley are appropriate both for a marriage sacrifice and the human sacrifice that is actually being prepared; the bridal victim will not be a bull, as one would suppose, but Iphigenia herself. Clytemnestra, however, now recognizes his false communication for what it is, and calls Iphigenia out of the tent with the baby Orestes, in the hopes that Agamemnon's riddling words will collapse when he sees the gathering of his whole family that is the object of his deception. Agamemnon notices that Iphigenia is crying and covering her face; his inquiry as to what has happened (1122–1123) is reminiscent of the Iphis and Evadne scene in *Suppliant Women*, in that Agamemnon should already know what the women are alluding to. Here, the miscommunication is more sinister and springs less from stupidity than from panic. Clytemnestra explicitly asks Agamemnon if he intends to kill their daughter (1131); Agamemnon's reply is that his wife's suspicions are unfitting for her (*ha mê se chrê*, 1132), and then that the question is not reasonable (*eikos*, 1134). Finally comes denial, when he blurts, *ti d'êdikêsai?* ("What harm have I done?" 1137). Now it is Clytemnestra's turn to accuse him of being out of his mind (1139), and Agamemnon is eventually driven to silence (*sigân*, 1142; *siôpô*, 1144).

As Clytemnestra begins her *rhesis*, she pledges to abandon the riddling speech of Agamemnon's lies: "I will use open speech (*anakalypsô*

logous) and no more use obscure riddles (*parôidois ainigmasin*)" (1146–1147). Since the verb *anakalypsô* is often suggestive of the removing of a veil, Clytemnestra's line is reminiscent of the beginning of Cassandra's *rhesis* in the *Oresteia*, where the prophetess promises to speak no longer like a bride glancing through veils (*ek kalymmatôn, Agamemnon* 1178) but with clarity and without riddles (*ouket' ex ainigmatôn, Agamemnon* 1183). Just as Aeschylus' Cassandra began her moments of lucidity by telling the Argive elders the story of Thyestes' feast as a kind of verbal proof of her prophetic powers, Euripides' Clytemnestra begins her *rhesis* by narrating to her audience (Agamemnon) an event he already knows. This narrative, however, is actually a kind of riddle to the audience in the theater—a sudden revelation that Agamemnon had murdered Clytemnestra's first husband and killed her infant child (*Iphigenia in Aulis* 1150–1151). This amazing story is probably another of Euripides' famous innovations, since this is the only surviving instance of this version of the myth. It makes a fine prelude to a persuasion speech, but makes even more sense if we read it as part of a scene modeled on the Aeschylean Cassandra scene. In *Agamemnon*, Cassandra acts as a kind of messenger before the murder, describing in gory (albeit riddling) detail the slaughter of the king by his wife. Euripides' Clytemnestra in her *rhesis* also prophesies what would happen if Iphigenia should be sacrificed for this war: how years of loneliness would warp her regard for her husband (1171–1173), how he could expect a certain kind of homecoming (1182), how he would force her to become an evil wife (1184)—all of which the audience knows come true in the plot of the *Oresteia*. More to the point, Cassandra's description of the feast of Thyestes is itself invoked by Aeschylus as part of the cyclical misfortune of the House of Atreus; the murder of husband by wife in the *Agamemnon* and the murder of mother by son in *Libation Bearers* are extensions of the first instance of kin-killing, namely, the Thyestean feast. Similarly, Euripides' Clytemnestra begins her prophecy/*rhesis* with the narrative of her first marriage which Euripides invents to provide a cyclical pattern for his series of events. In the past, Agamemnon killed her infant child; soon he will kill another of her children, Iphigenia. In the past, Clytemnestra's brothers (the Dioscuri) made war on Agamemnon (1153–1154); in the near future, Clytemnestra herself will make war on Agamemnon by killing him.

When both Clytemnestra's and Iphigenia's *rheseis* fail to dissuade Agamemnon, the women share a moment of grief with the chorus (1276). Even though the male space of the army has proven to be

a hostile place for a king's wife and daughter, Euripides provides his female protagonists with the luxury of a female chorus to sympathize with their plight, albeit very infrequently. As women in male space, this chorus of women from Chalcis who have come sightseeing have the same lack of authority as the female protagonists. Thus they offer Clytemnestra and Iphigenia some sort of female company in the midst of an army which, it turns out, has no qualms about murdering the young girl (1347ff.).

In the last part of the drama, it is Iphigenia's turn to be concerned with female propriety and decide what is proper. When Achilles is heard approaching, Iphigenia insists that she must hide herself, for she feels ashamed to see him (*aischynomai*, 1341; *aidô*, 1342). Clytemnestra assures her this is no time for modesty (1344), but in fact Iphigenia observes that modesty by not speaking for almost thirty lines. It is not until after the rapid *antilabe* in trochaic tetrameters (in which Achilles explains that the Greek army is ready to kill the girl, but that he will defend her, 1345–1368), that Iphigenia has her famous *volte-face* and announces (also in tetrameters) her willingness to be sacrificed (1368–1401). Whatever the dramatic motivation may or may not be, a few things are noteworthy. Like Evadne, Iphigenia hopes to win renown for her willingness to die: "I have resolved to die, and I want to do this gloriously (*eukleôs*)" (1375–1376), "And when I have saved Greece, my renown (*kleos*) will be blessed (*makarion*)" (1383–1384). In keeping with the play's theme of the negotiation of what is right, Iphigenia's decision turns out to be based on what she considers right (*eikos*, 1400): namely, that it is *eikos* for Greeks to rule barbarians, not the other way around. Clytemnestra had spent the entire play determining what was proper for her and her daughter as women in male space. When she thought a wedding was involved, she depended on her own sense of propriety; when she learned a human sacrifice was involved, she turned to a man (Achilles) for direction. Now Iphigenia's momentous decision has determined what is proper; as the willing sacrifice, she restructures the parameters of female behavior and essentially gains ownership of female propriety. That is to say, it is Iphigenia who now tells her mother how she should act: there is to be no cutting of the hair or dressing in mourning (1437–1438), not even by Iphigenia's sisters home in Argos (1447–1448). There will be no burial mound (1442), and above all, no tears (1466), nor will Clytemnestra escort her to the sacrificial altar (1459–1461). She also asks her mother not to bear a grudge against Agamemnon (1454–

1457), the only promise the audience fully knows Clytemnestra cannot keep.

Finally Iphigenia instructs the chorus (addressing them as young women, *ô neanides*, at 1467 and 1491) at first to speak with good omen (which amounts to being silent), and then to sing a paean (1468) to Artemis, most of which Iphigenia performs herself. This is the first instance of anyone in the play (with the exception of Agamemnon's brief command for silence, and Clytemnestra's equally brief request for help with the baby) directing the women from Chalcis on how to conduct themselves. They do what they are told, and even say the kind of things Iphigenia wants to hear, such as a wish that her *kleos* will never disappear (1504). In the end, then, by her willingness to be the victim, Iphigenia earns the privilege of designing her own death ritual, including silence (*euphêmia*, 1469) among the Greeks in the camp, a lock of hair (*plokamos*, 1478) to crown herself with, and various attendants to deal with baskets (*kanâ*, 1470) and fire and water for the altar. Thus, in this army camp, she actually achieves a degree of authority that—as a woman—she should lack. In this she resembles so many other self-sacrificing Euripidean women, like Evadne, who gain a short-lived glory and renown through a public death. One thinks of Macaria discussed earlier in this chapter; she, too, wants to leave life gloriously (*eukleôs lipein bion, Children of Heracles* 534), and is told that she will be most honored (*timiôtatê*, 598) after she is dead. Macaria also is able to prescribe her own ritual, insisting that her body be tended by women's hands and not men's (565–566). Polyxena in *Hecuba* also insists on a particular manner of her death when she orders her sacrificers not to touch her, since she will die of her own free will; she bares her breasts and dares Neoptolemus to strike anywhere, breast, neck, or throat (*Hecuba* 547–565).

There is something deeply poignant about these self-sacrificing women; not only was Greek mythology full of numerous examples, but Euripides repeatedly staged them as characters who speak briefly but eloquently, with a courage that puts to shame the men who witness them (Achilles, Iolaus, Talthybius). And yet, as with Evadne, is this selflessness enough for these women's sacrifices/suicides to make sense? In many of his plays, Euripides forgets about these women; Macaria never resurfaces in *Children of Heracles*, and Evadne is not mentioned again for the remainder of *Suppliant Women*. By allowing women to speak so authoritatively and then killing them off, Euripides sends an ambiguous message to his theater audience. In some sense, Evadne and

Iphigenia and Macaria are punished for taking on their assertive roles. Nor do people in the plays learn from these women's examples. In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the audience knows Clytemnestra will not accept her daughter's death as a willing sacrifice, but will instead avenge her death by murdering Agamemnon. In *Children of Heracles*, Macaria's noble death is contrasted with Alcmene's highly criticized behavior at the play's end, when she threatens to violate the land's customs of amnesty in order to revenge herself against the captive Eurystheus. The *kleos* to which these women appeal, and which they hope will carry on after them in people's memories, appears to vanish once they die; in death, they return once more to silence, but a permanent one.[35]

[35] Discussions of self-sacrificing tragic women are many and varied. Compare Loraux (1987); Rabinowitz (1993); and Wohl (1998). Radical feminist scholarship is also keenly interested in this topic. Terri Marsh's fictional account of an ancient Athenian woman in the theater audience reads, "When, a few years later, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* was performed, my rage and frustration got the better of me. As the maiden read her own masochistic desires as a form of noble heroism (in words similar to these: 'to Greece I give this body of mine. Slay it in sacrifice and conquer Troy. For in war it is far better that many women go to their death, if this keep only one man alive,' *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1390–1395), I heard myself cry out: their sadism requires a story, and so our story is the story of their desire and of our own masochism. And, like the elderly woman I now resembled, I was gagged and they threw me from the theater" (Marsh 1992: 277).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

When Aristophanes in his *Frogs* dramatizes the afterlife *agôn* of Aeschylus and Euripides, he raises the issue of the appropriateness of female heroines for the Athenian public stage:

ΑΙ. ὅθεν ἡμὴ φρὴν ἀπομαξαμένη πολλὰς ἀρετὰς ἐπόησεν,
Πατρόκλων, Τεύκρων θυμολεόντων, ἵν' ἐπαίροιμ' ἄνδρα πολίτην
ἀντεκτείνειν αὑτὸν τούτοις, ὁπόταν σάλπιγγος ἀκούσῃ.
ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐ Φαίδρας ἐποίουν πόρνας οὐδὲ Σθενεβοίας,
οὐδ' οἶδ' οὐδεὶς ἥντιν' ἐρῶσαν πώποτ' ἐποίησα γυναῖκα.
[...]
ΕΥ. καὶ τί βλάπτουσ', ὦ σχέτλι' ἀνδρῶν, τὴν πόλιν ἁμαὶ Σθενέβοιαι;
ΑΙ. ὅτι γενναίας καὶ γενναίων ἀνδρῶν ἀλόχους ἀνέπεισας
κώνεα πίνειν αἰσχυνθείσας διὰ τοὺς σοὺς Βελλεροφόντας.
ΕΥ. πότερον δ' οὐκ ὄντα λόγον τοῦτον περὶ τῆς Φαίδρας ξυνέθηκα;
ΑΙ. μὰ Δί', ἀλλ' ὄντ', ἀλλ' ἀποκρύπτειν χρὴ τὸ πονηρὸν τόν γε ποητήν,
καὶ μὴ παράγειν μηδὲ διδάσκειν. τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισίν
ἐστὶ διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ' ἡβῶσι ποηταί.
πάνυ δὴ δεῖ χρηστὰ λέγειν ἡμᾶς.

AESCHYLUS: Making a model of [Homer], my spirit wrote of many virtues,
those of Patrocluses and lion-hearted Teucers, so that I would excite the citizen
to match himself with these whenever he heard the war trumpet.
But never, by Zeus, did I write of whorish Phaedras or Stheneboeas,
and no one knows what woman in love I ever portrayed.
[...]
EURIPIDES: But in what way, headstrong fool, did my Stheneboeas harm the city?
AESCHYLUS: Because you drove noble women and wives of noble men
to drink hemlock, shamed by your Bellerophons.
EURIPIDES: Was the story I told about Phaedra not already existing?
AESCHYLUS: By Zeus, it existed, but the poets should hide from view what is base,
nor bring it on stage, nor produce it. For boys at school
there is a teacher who explains things; but for adults, there are the poets.
That being so, we must tell noble things.

Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1040–1044, 1049–1056

Aristophanes is famous for parodying his colleague and rival Euripides while the latter was alive; but even after Euripides' death, the comic stage could debate the message that *to ponêron* ("vice") conveyed to audiences of tragedy when it was delivered by women from myth. The experiences and private knowledge about which female characters sing involve very private matters: infidelity, rape, betrayal by family. The fact that Euripides continued to use women at the center of his dramatic plots more or less obligated him to expand the manner in which tragic women could express themselves, in order to make women more 'interesting' and to deflect objections that the staging of such private topics was inappropriate.[1]

This study has shown that Euripidean women express themselves in ways that are very distinct from men. Women are repeatedly shown engaged in intimate conversations, sharing knowledge to which men have no access. Women abound in female solidarity and appeal to each other on the basis of common female interests (with the exception of the chorus of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, a fact which in itself is innovative); this kind of interaction is never available to tragic men. Euripidean women are also sharply aware of the greater culture's opinion of them; that is, they know that men generalize women's offenses (mostly sexual) so that one woman's wickedness can taint the reputation of all woman, even virtuous ones.

Song is a mode of expression open to women for a rich range of thematic purposes. This book has argued that song signals more than mere excited emotion, but indeed *communicates* what is important to the singer. Song in tragedy is an aural focalizer that encourages the Athenian spectator (and the reader of the text) to visualize the world through the singer's eyes and identify with her experience. Song is a register of high intensity or feeling in moments of powerlessness, providing an extra-rational connection to what is invisible or absent, including fantasy, memory, and supernatural or divine occurrences. Through song,

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[1] Ann Hanson was the first to suggest to me that Aristophanes' interest (dramatized in *Frogs*) in the appropriateness of staging 'family topics,' even after Euripides' death, is proof that the issue of how women should appear on stage remained topical in the community at large. She has noted to me that the two Sophoclean plays produced after Euripides' departure from Athens are the 'resolutely male' *Philoctetes*, and the *Oedipus at Colonus* (which ends with both the male chorus and Theseus trying to get Oedipus' daughters to cease their legitimate lamentations over Oedipus' disappearance). She also wonders to what extent these two plays of Sophocles are a commentary on Euripides' experiments with the feminization of Athenian tragedy.

Euripidean women signal transitional moments (Hecuba and Andromache in their name plays), express resistance (Alcestis, Electra, and Hypsipyle), reveal vital personal knowledge to an avid male listener (recognition scenes), or interrogate a male speaker (Hecuba in *Trojan Women*, Antigone in *Phoenician Women*, Hypsipyle). Contrarily, song does not afford Euripidean men such channels of expression. Instead, men's lyrics signal a crisis or condition that is potentially demasculinizing, such as grief, indecision, physical pain, or immaturity.

Tragic silence also has different semantic implications for both sexes. Three Euripidean men (Adrastus, Orestes from his name play, and Menoeceus) employ a selective silence that can be called 'partial muteness.' These selective silences are preludes to persuasive speeches in which they share new narrative information. Euripidean women do not employ this selective silence; instead, Euripides assigns song to women as the proper manner for them to share personal information, especially in self-defense or persuasion of a male listener. Female silences in Euripides usually involve the keeping of secrets. Euripidean men, in contrast, do not have personal secrets they need to hide; rather, what few secrets they do have are part of an intrigue and not intended to be permanent. Female choruses who swear to keep silent women's secrets are motivated by female solidarity, and they sometimes resort to lies to conceal what they know. Even though Euripides' heroines should be concerned that their revelation of potentially scandalous personal secrets might encourage female gossip, female choruses are always sympathetic.

In a manner consistent with making his fictional women 'sound like women,' Euripides invents women who are self-conscious about speaking in a male space. This self-consciousness can take the form of an apology, which is the female equivalent to the 'partial muteness' of men. Women wait to speak until a crucial moment, but cannot share their point of view until they have first convinced their male audience that the circumstances warrant their interference. The apology is the necessary prelude to women's effective participation in helping men reach proper decisions. The self-consciousness of other women (like Clytemnestra and Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Aulis*) takes the form of trying to negotiate what is proper at any moment. Women's speech in male space (as well as their very presence there) can also be riddling (such as Evadne).

Throughout his corpus, Euripides' interest in women as tragic characters is grounded in his representation of women possessing particu-

lar experiences (both physical and social) not shared by men. Physical experiences such as pregnancy (even extraordinary pregnancies resulting from divine intercourse) are part and parcel of the body which all women have in common. Shared social experiences include the alienation a woman finds in marriage, the cultural ideologies of women's separate spheres and silence in male space, and the recognition that men generalize about women's desires. Women also share experiences as mothers, caregivers, and—as Melanippe purports in her speech from the fragmentary *Captive Melanippe*—as organizers of households and participators in public functions, especially as priestesses. All these experiences contribute to a kind of female knowledge of past events and present remedies which is different, and sometimes superior to, male knowledge. That is, Euripidean women offer the best solutions to crises. Sometimes these have public consequences; Macaria sacrifices herself for Athens' battle against Argos, and Aethra convinces Theseus to rescue the bodies of the Seven. At other times, women's solutions betray an innate cleverness: Helen and Iphigenia help their male rescuers plan their escape from captivity in a foreign land; Electra in her name play devises the ruse to kill her mother, while Electra in *Orestes* gives advice on the murder of Helen.

At the same time, it is not the intent of this book to universalize Euripidean women as though they were homogeneous. One can only speak of general tendencies in the characterization of women on the Attic stage, not of absolute patterns, because these did not exist. Each female character has individual and extraordinary experiences beyond those they share with other women; for instance, there are victims of divine madness (Phaedra, Pasiphaë, Agave), divine abduction (Iphigenia and Helen) and divine rape (Creusa, Antiope, Melanippe). One of the most pleasurable features of Euripides is his exploration of a wide range of female types, each of whom have the potential to be more exciting than the previous one. The fictional Aeschylus in the afterworld of Aristophanes' *Frogs* remembers only Euripides' wicked women (Sthenoboea, Phaedra), but Euripides also had his share of pious and self-sacrificing virgins (Macaria, Theonoe, Polyxena, and Iphigenia), embittered young women in their sexual prime (Electra, Hermione), faithful wives (Helen in her name play, Andromache, Alcestis, Evadne), shrewd matriarchs (Hecuba, Jocasta, Aethra, Alcmene), and priestesses (Cassandra, Iphigenia, Theonoe, the Pythia). Euripides points to these women's commonality by the use of song, silences, apologies, and intimate conversations as significant female modes of communication; but

he also individualizes each of his female characters by appealing to their unique experiences and reactions to tragic crises.

Is Euripides then sympathetic to women? Is this his message for the Athenian male audience? He goes to great pains to show even wicked women (e.g. Medea and Creusa) in a sympathetic light by problematizing the myths of which these women are a part. Medea must take revenge on Jason, and Creusa must try to kill her own son, but what motivates these acts is not a simplistic female jealousy or anger or lust, but a complicated story of male betrayal, deceit, and rejection. Despite Euripides' penchant for dramatizing women's passionate emotions (the *Leidenschaft* which the Schlegels in the early nineteenth century famously derided as integral to Euripides' degradation and ruination of the tragic genre), it is not the passions themselves which are the problem, but the men who inspire them.[2] Many an undergraduate studying *Medea* has argued that Medea over-reacts to her rejection by Jason; it may be so, but no study of Medea's passionate character is complete without an admission of Jason's role in creating and antagonizing her desperation. On the tragic stage, men are revealed to be at the core of women's problems; nor is there a shortage in Euripidean drama of disillusioned, self-important male roles (Jason, Hippolytus, Polyneices, Eteocles, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Orestes, Xuthus, Admetus, etc.). Does this mean Euripides preaches to Athenian men to be nicer to their women? This would be too simplistic. Instead, Euripides is primarily concerned with what is dramatically interesting, and women are interesting because they are not simple.

It was my hope that some consistent Euripidean 'project' regarding gender would emerge from this study of his invention and use of female speech. What seems clear at the end of this investigation is that Euripides explores not one consistent project, but a variety of smaller projects, as various as the types (or subgenders) of female roles he introduces into his plays. What Euripides represents on the stage is deliberately disorienting. His women struggle to control communicative space, and as a result, an audience is drowned by conflicting reactions and sympathies. At one moment, women's conversations are innocent; a sympathetic chorus tries to comfort Electra or Hypsipyle by advising her to stop singing of the past and move forward into the present. At another, women's conversations evoke pity; women confess their private

[2] See Michelini (1988) for a discussion of the Schelgels and their value-laden interpretation of Euripides.

stories of divine abduction or rape, and captive women share songs of communal grief. Still later, women's conversations become alarmingly dangerous as women display such an exaggerated attachment to their domestic security that they react violently to any threat to it; a chorus of neighbors watches disinterestedly as Hermione tries to kill her husband Neoptolemus' concubine, then runs off with her cousin Orestes, who had already killed Neoptolemus; another chorus of neighbors agrees to allow Medea to take revenge on Jason; Creusa plots to kill her new stepson Ion; Phaedra accuses her stepson of rape to protect her own reputation, but at the price of her own life.

Female speech, or rather female modes of communication, are integral to these projects as Euripides toys with his male audience's sympathies in a constant tug-of-war. At times he entices men to gaze on the world through the singing woman's eyes and to identify with her status as a victim of war, of violence, of slavery, or even of a social institution like marriage. At other times, he bewilders the audience with an Evadne, Andromache, or Alcestis, hyperboles of marital virtue. Occasionally he showcases the well-bred woman who apologizes for her interference, or the self-sacrificing virgin whose piety puts even the men on stage to shame. Then, in the very next play, he might again tap into men's anxieties and frighten them with Medeas and Phaedras surrounded by women keeping silent about their devious plots—the negative correlative of the idealized silence of respectable women. But in all this, Euripides creates every woman as a complicated character with potential for good and evil, and never so much of either that she can be judged absolutely. No audience can forget that Medea killed her children, but neither can they forget the circumstances that drove her to it. Euripides forces his spectator to identify with what he is not—a woman—and simultaneously distrust and sometimes loathe the other sex. In the final analysis, it is Euripidean women's ability to render an audience always at odds with itself that makes Euripidean tragedy so intriguing, disturbing, unnerving, exciting, and ultimately immortal.

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